

A
DISCOURSE

(Philosophical and Practical)

Concerning the

Existence of G O D.

W H E R E I N

The Principles of the *Epicureans* and *Hobbits* of our Age are particularly shewn ; the great Absurdities of them proved ; the EXISTENCE of the Ever Blessed GOD vindicated ; the Reasonableness and Wildom of Religion insisted on ; and several necessary Ways proposed, for the Improving in People a Religious Sense of GOD.

P A R T II. K

By EDWARD PELLING, D. D.
*Rector of Petworth in Suffex, and
Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.*

Sold by *John Nutt* near *Stationers-Hall*,
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To Her most Excellent

MAJESTY

Our most Gracious

Queen *A N N E.*

May it please Your Sacred Majesty,

IT has been a Custom in the Court of *Rome*, when they would be rid of a Man whom they do not like, to Entitle him to a Cure in *Partibus Infidelium* (as they express it) meaning in some remote Pagan Part of the World, to Convert Infidels. A very hard Task, since Miracles are ceased. Nay, I cannot well tell, whether Mi-

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racles themselves would convince some in this Age, who have laid aside *Moses* and the Prophets, and, to defend their Infidelity, have set up a sort of Philosophy in Opposition to Divine Revelation. *Philosophy* is the Ground they go upon; according to the Strain whereof the World was made, not by the Contrivance of a most Wise and Good Being, whom we call God, but by the various Concretions and Combinations of little Particles of Matter, or Bodies, which they call *Atoms*; which after infinite Freaks and Conflicts did at last, by meer Chance, jump into this beautiful Frame, without any Directions from a *Provident* and *Over-ruling Deity*: And that the Course of the World doth still continue after the same *Casual* and *Fortuitous Manner*, without the *Superintendency*

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dency of a *Divine Being*, distinct from senseless and stupid *Matter*. So that could we shew Miracles to convince these Men, they would pass with them for things of Chance; nay, could we raise one from the Dead, they would say, (according to the Principles of their *Philosophy*) that the Man jump'd out of the Grave by the same lucky Vigour of *Atoms*, whereby *Atoms* did formerly leap by Chance into that goodly Fabrick which we behold in the Universe.

The Design of this Philosophy was to Banish all Notions of a God, and to introduce *Atheism*. For though many very Ancient *Philosophers* held the *Doctrine* of *Atoms*, (and the *Doctrine* in those times was Ingenious and Innocent, because it was held together with the *Doctrine* of a Supreme

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pream, Intelligent Deity) yet to After-ages it was corrupted in Atheistical Purposes: And *Epicurus* was one of those *Pagan Greeks*, who being Atheistically inclined, Debauched that Philosophy with an Impious Design to destroy all the old Notions of a Provident God over the Universe. But as the Names and Memories of those *Atheists* were hated for it, so were their Principles condemned by the Sober Philosophers in times succeeding. By which means those *Atheistical Principles* would in all probability have lost their Venom (at least their Poyson would not have spread so far as *England*) had they not been digged up of late out of the Monuments of those vile Men, by some here at home as vile as those *Pagans*; especially by Mr. *Hobbes* of *Malmsbury*, who
revived

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revived those rotten Principles in the late Times of *Rebellion* and *Confusion*, with a Design to corrupt this Nation with the Contagion of *them* under *Cromwell's* Tyranny.

That evil Man publisht, among some other Books, that which bears the Title of *Leviathan*; wherein he Filched the Principles of those old *Atheistick Philosophers*, and put them into a New Dress with his utmost Wit and Artifice; that by the Tumbling of the *Leviathan* about this Nation, with all his Atmosphere of Infection about him, a General Plague might follow upon our Religion and Morals.

According to those, his stollen, *Pagan Principles*, there is nothing in the whole World but Matter, (or Body) and the necessary Motions of Matter (which is called

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Mechanism); no Ghost nor Spirit; no Immaterial Deity; no Infinite Power; no Soul distinct from Body; no Immortal Soul; no Religion, but what is grounded upon Tales publicly allowed by the Civil Magistrate; no Profession of any sort of Religion unlawful, if it be allowed; no Sin, if as to Religion a Man thinks one thing, and speaks or does another, tho' it be against his own private Conscience; no Eternal Torments in another World to be feared by any one Man; nor any such Threats of Hell-fire, as the Clergy preach, to be dreaded. Any Man may see this, (*Pag. 373.*) he compares them all to an empty Hat and Doublet, and crooked Stick set up to fright Birds from the Corn. These are a few of his pestilential Principles.

Your

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YOUR SACRED MAJESTY will easily remember what was Written against this Book, by that Admirable Person, whose Memory is Venerated by all true hearted *English-men* (for his great Parts, Wisdom, Piety, and Zeal for the good of this Kingdom, as well as for his unshaken Fidelity and Affection to his Prince) I mean, MADAM, the Noble Earl of *Clarendon*, in his Survey of Mr. *Hobbes's Leviathan*. That Excellent Person having particularly observed those pernicious Doctrines which concern Religion, and that (among many others) which introduces (as long as Thought is free) such a Licence of Dissimulation and Hypocrisy, as is odious in the Civil Actions of our Life, but most detestable in the Eyes and Judgment of God and Man, in all
Acts

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Acts which concern Religion ,
and the Worship of his Divine
Majesty; (*Pag. 215.*) and having
reflected upon the most mischie-
vous Principles , and destructive
to the Peace both of Church
and State, which are scattered
throughout the *Leviathan* , and
the unhappy Impression they had
then already made in the Minds
of too many : His Lordship sent
Mr. *Hobbes* word , (tho' he had
had the Honour of his Acquain-
tance, as long as he behaved
himself like a Man of Worth)
*That by the Constitution of any Go-
vernment then Establiſhed in Eu-
rope , whether Monarchical or
Democratical, the Author of that
Book ought to be puniſhed in the
higheſt Degree , and with the moſt
ſevere Penalties.* These are that
Honourable Persons own Words,
in the Introduction to his Survey.
The

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The old *Athenian* Commonwealth condemned *Protagoras* to Banishment, and ordered his Books to be burnt, for but questioning the Existence of their God's. And it seems very strange, That this most *Atheistical Book* has not as yet been publickly condemned by this Christian State, professing such a Zeal for the Honour of the only True God, and for the Advancement and Interest of the true Religion; especially considering what evil Impressions it has made on the Minds of very many Men in this irreligious and lewd Age. All serious Men are too sensible of the vast Mischiefs which Mr. *Hobbes's* Doctrines have already done in many Parts of this Your MAJESTY'S Kingdom. The many necessary Discourses which have been Written of late concerning
the

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the Truth and Reasonableness of Religion; the constant Complaints which have been heard from several places, of the Prevalence of Infidelity; and the Personal Experience, which Pious People could give a further sad Account of: These things shew, That instead of a Witty History of the Growth of *Popery*, we have more need now of a serious Account of the Growth of *Atheism*: Not to speak of the ill Usage which the Clergy commonly meet with from this sort of Men, who look upon us not only as a superfluous Order that might be well spared, and as a mercenary Order, that for their own Interest make themselves the Tools of Politicians; but moreover as a mischievous Order of Men from the highest to the lowest, that Disquiet and
Plague.

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Plauge the Minds of People with Fears, far beyond the Frightnings of an Empty Hat and Doublet, and a Crooked Stick.

Towards the Suppressing of these spreading and most scandalous Mischiefs, I have thought my little self bound by a particular Tye of Conscience to use my Endeavours, as other Honest Men have heartily done. Accordingly, M A D A M, I publish'd, not long ago, a Discourse to prove the *Existence of God* by Plain Reasoning and Philosophical Observations; and (according to my Promise then) I have now Written a more Practical Part upon that most necessary Subject, which I now present to Your M A J E S T Y, most humbly desiring Your M A J E S T Y'S favourable Acceptance of it.

Your

DEDICATION.

Your MAJESTY'S most Exemplary Piety and Christian Sincerity in the Constant Profession of God's True Religion, from Your Youth (as those who have had the Happiness and Honour of having been acquainted with Your Pious Disposition all along, could (if there were any need) personally Attest) should, one would think, put a Stop to the Progress of *Infidelity*. But some People are not to be wrought upon by the best and noblest Examples; nor is it to be doubted, but Your MAJESTY will (for the sake of God's Honour) use such other laudable Means of Reclaiming, or (at least) of Discouraging and Discountenancing those Men, who (upon wicked Principles) bear the same hatred towards Your Throne, as they do towards God Almighty

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mighty, whose immediate *Vicegerent* You are, and by whose *Protection* and *Special Providence*, all good Men do hope, that Your **MAJESTY** may enjoy a most *Happy, Prosperous, and Long, Long Reign* over us: I am sure it is the daily Prayer of,

M A D A M,

Your Majesty's most Humble,

Faithful and Devoted

Subject and Chaplain,

Edward Pelling.

The Author living at a great Distance from the Press,
several *Errata's* have been committed; which the
Reader is desired to Correct.

PAge 11. line 22. read *Novity*, p. 20. l. 29. r. *Light*, p. 23.
l. 4. r. *Cover*, p. 27. l. 3. r. *Cone*, p. 29. l. 17. r. *Throws*, p. 46.
l. 6. r. *the brusk*, p. 46. l. 22. r. *Rushing into*, p. 47. l. 10. r. *Un-
knowing*, p. 52. l. 3. r. *whereof 'tis a Mode*, p. 52. l. 25. r. *whose
Reason is Not debauch'd*, p. 53. l. 17. r. *Satisfy*, p. 55. l. 2. r. *and
in that respect*, p. 57. l. 24. r. *among them*, p. 69. l. 2. r. *Render
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r. *antecedently* instead of *undecently*, p. 109. l. 4. r. *which they
think not now of*, p. 110. l. 25. r. *Hallow*, p. 115. l. 16. instead of
Doctrines r. *Rectitude*, p. 126. l. 15. r. *doth*, p. 141. l. 8. r. *Un-
directed*, p. 172. l. 14. r. *Fecundity* instead of *Humility*, p. 210.
l. 8. r. *Rorid*, p. 221. l. 10. r. *proceeding*, p. 222. l. 7. r. *Intire*,
p. 224. l. ult. r. *deterr*.

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(Philosophical and Practical)

CONCERNING

The Existence of GOD.

C H A P. I.

TH E acknowledging G O D's Existence, being the Foundation of all those Acts of Religion which are *directed*, or do *relate* to him, I have in a former Discourse endeavour'd, in as concise a way as the nature of the Argument would allow me, to demonstrate the *Truth* and *Certainty* of it, and to clear this great Principle from those Cavils which are wont to be used by Men of distemper'd Brains, whose Lusts and Vices make them afraid to own so just

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and powerful a Being, as the Notion of a Deity signifies ; But because the Belief of a God can do *Men* no more Good than it does the *Devils*, unless it hath a due Influence upon our Minds and Actions, it will be necessary for me now to proceed from the *Speculative* to the more *Practical Part* of this Subject, and to shew how we are to behave our selves towards a Nature so *Divine*, so *transcendently Perfect*, and *Excellent*.

Now that we may reduce this whole Matter into Practice, there are these Things that will naturally follow :

- I. That we must possess our Souls with a *Firm* and *Immoveable* Perswasion, That there really is a most *Perfect Being*, or God, presiding over all Things, and acting in the World.
- II. That we must endeavour daily to *Improve* and *Increase* the Sense of him.
- III. That we must entertain *becoming* and *worthy* Apprehensions of him in our Minds.
- IV. That we must devoutly *Adore* him.
- V. That we must obediently Submit to him in all Things.
- VI. That,

VI. That, according to our Capacities, we must endeavour to *Imitate* his Divine Perfections.

VII. That in all Cases we must depend upon his Providence, both as to the Concerns of This Life, and as to a Future State.

These *Heads* are General and Few, but they will cost some Time that they may be rightly consider'd, because they contain a Draught of those great Lineaments of Religion, which respect the ever-blessed God.

I. First then we must possess our Souls with a *firm* and *immoveable* Perswasion, That there is a God, a most Perfect and Excellent Being presiding over us; 'Tis indeed too sad a Truth, that even in this Age some Pretenders to Sense and Wit have so little Regard for the Belief of a Deity, that they endeavour, not only to *Dispute* it away, as an *unreasonable Conceit*; but also, to *banter* and laugh People out of it, as a very *unwise* Imagination; because it serves to keep them in perpetual Awe, and so restrains them from many present Satisfactions and Pleasures, which

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otherwise they might enjoy with great Freedom and Security.

So that as to this point, there are Two Things that are to be considered, namely, *Reason* and *Prudence*; or, whether the Belief of a most perfect Being over All be not incomparably the most *Rational*, and moreover the *Best*, the most *Useful*, and the *Wiseſt* Principle.

And to begin with the *Reasonableneſs* of it. That certainly is the most *Rational* Principle, which yields to the Mind of every *ſober* and *unprejudiced* Perſon the *cleareſt*, the *eaſieſt*, and the most *ſatisfactory* Account of Things. Now if we ſhould go about to ſurvey Particulars, *Infinite* are the Things which, without the Suppoſition of a Deity, muſt be uncapable of admitting a fair Solution. I inſtance in *Two* Sorts, which, in reſpect of their Cauſes, muſt be unaccountable to Men who think with ſober Freedom, unleſs we reſolve all at laſt into the good Pleaſure of a *Powerful* and *Wiſe* Creator.

I. Thoſe Appearances of Nature, which the *Material* World preſents to our *Outward* Senſes.

II. Thoſe

II. Those *Powers* and *Operations*, which we Experimentally find in our own Souls.

1. *First*, for those Appearances of Nature, which the *Material* World presents to our Outward Senses.

Let us but take a little View of the Surface of the Earth, and we see the vast Variety of Plants, Trees, and Animals; we observe the constant, uniform Operations of their respective Natures, the various Disposition of their Parts, the various Contexture of their Species, and the various Inclinations of their Appetites, in order to the Support of their several Faculties, to the Propagation of their *Kind*, and to the Preservation of their own *Lives*. In all, we observe a fixt and steady manner of working in every Rank and Order, wherein each particular Species is placed; and to what can any Rational Man, with Satisfaction, ascribe all this, but to the Inexhaustable Fecundity of a *Divine Power*, and to the Unsearchable Treasures of *Divine Wisdom*. If it be said, That all this proceeds from an *Inward Necessity* in Nature; I demand, How came that Necessity to be *imprest*

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on the Natures of those several Beings? If it be reply'd, That it came originally by *Chance*, from the Concurrence of *blind, material* Particles, *casually* falling into such and such *Forms*, and thenceforth constantly acting after such and such a *manner*: I ask again, how a *contrary, undesigned* Cause can produce *contrary, undesigned* and *constant* Effects? How *Chance* (which is the most uncertain thing in the World) can produce fixt *Regularity*? or, how *Inconstancy* can produce unalterable *Stability*? This is to make an *Effect* to rise higher than its *Cause*, and to *give* a great deal more than what it hath in *its self*, which is tantamount to bring *something* out of *nothing*, which on all hands is concluded by the Course of *Nature* to be absolutely and utterly impossible.

They that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters, what Wonders do they not see; And can those Stupendious Works be ascribed to a Cause that had neither Sense to *contrive*, nor any Faculties to *think*? Could *Dead, Stupid* Atoms, combining and clutching together by meer Accident, without a Superintending *Hand*, replenish the Ocean with such

numerous Tribes of Living Sensitive Creatures, so exactly form'd and adapted to their Habitation, and so admirably fitted for their respective Uses? Could Blundering Matter form it self into Salt, and then season the Liquid Parts so artificially to preserve them from Putrefaction, and so *critically* too, as to provide the greatest quantities of Salt for those Parts of the Ocean where they are most *needful*? Did unaccountable *Fortune*, in an Hurly-burly and Freaks, throw the Waters forward and backward, and then by a fixt Edict so wisely perpetuate those regular and useful Tides, of which the most inquisitive Philosophers could never yet give any Satisfactory Reasons? Let us next turn *up* our Eyes to Heaven; and can we Rationally conceive, that *unthinking Chance* and *rude Matter* could of it self form that stupendious Expansion to swaddle up Nature, so that every part of it here below might be capable of its benign, cherishing, fomenting, and enlivening Influences? Can we with the least *Satisfaction* imagine, that any thing but an Almighty Power could make those vast Numbers of great and glorious Luminaries in the Firmament? that any

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thing but Infinite Wisdom could order their several Courses? that any thing but the Goodness of a Beneficent Being could appoint their Motions; so that they are for the Benefit, Succour, and Comfort of the whole Sublunary World? or that any thing but a wise and gracious Providence could to this day *conserve* and support them in their Courses, which are so constant, steady, and still exactly the very same they were in the beginning; that *supposing* a Law had been given them by a Divine Sovereign Majesty, they could not be more *Uniform* and *Regular*? To think that by an accidental Concurrence of blind Atoms those glittering Bodies happened to be made, and that they were toss'd like Balls, by chance no body knows how, into their Orderly Courses, and that thro' a long Tract of several Thousand Years they should continue still in the same order, and all this without the Superintending Hand of an All-wise and All-powerful Creator: To pretend this, is so far from giving us a *clear, ease, and satisfactory* Account, that it makes a Jest of the most Glorious Part of the Visible World, and affronts our Understandings, as if our
Rea-

Reason at this time of day was to be baffled into Sottishness and the grossest Stupidity. One would fancy that they who are so hardy as to conceive such absurd Notions as these, are in a ready way to believe the Monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Innumerable Things more might be instanced in; and the Truth is, there is not a Thing in Nature but what is unaccountable, either as to its constituent *Form*, or as to the *Manner* and *Reason* of its Operations, unless Men believe the Existence of a God, who by his Absolute Power and Inscrutable Wisdom hath given to every thing its proper Being, and laid every thing under a proper inviolable Law, which renders the Operations of all Irrational Creatures necessary. For though Philosophers have endeavoured to salve the Appearances which are in Nature, and have said enough to shew the Excellency of their own Parts, and to help others to tattle out a Disputation, yet the various Methods they have used, and the different Opinions that have been all along among them, are a convincing Argument, that Humane Reason of its self is too weak, and ever will

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will be at a loss, till the Belief of a Deity guide it. Indeed the *Epicurean* Philosophy is ingenious and pretty, and might be very passable, if we conclude and grant, that Matter it self was at first the Workmanship of God, and hath since been a subordinate Cause, and an ordinary Instrument in God's Hands. And if I may have Leave to offer my Opinion, methinks a *Stoick* for Morality, and an *Epicurean* for Natural Speculations, would both together make up one good Philosopher, if he were firmly settled upon right Notions of a Deity to resolve all Difficulties into at the last; but without this the most subtile *Epicurean* can never satisfie a Man of sober Reason, because undesigining Matter (which is to him instead of a God) dull, stupid, and dead Matter, of it self, and without a Superior, Wise, and Powerful Being, cannot possibly, by any casual Contextures, make up such Admirable Bodies as we see in the World, nor by any casual Motions produce such Admirable, Wise, and Useful Effects, as entertain our view every where; much less can it produce them after such a Constant, Uniform, and Regular Manner: And there-

therefore they who go upon that Principle, however they may please *themselves* with their own Whimfies (as Children are pleased with their Fancies in a Dream) cannot give Men of *solid* Understandings any Satisfactory, Rational Answer to those Problems, which Nature in all parts of the Universe offers to our Consideration, touching the Formation, the Production, the Motions, the Operations, and the Effects of things; together with the wonderful Regularity, Beauty, Order and Usefulness of All the Branches of the Creation.

And yet there is another unconquerable Difficulty which is still behind; I mean touching the *Original Existence* of that Matter which these Scepticks would have to be the Supream Cause of All Things, their only Deity. For either this Matter began to exist some Ages ago (which we call a Narity of Being) or else they must suppose it to have existed from All Eternity, or without any Beginning at all. Now which of those two ways soever they please to chuse, it must follow, that Matter existed of its self, because they disbelieve the Existence of any other Being

Being that made it; which Fancy is liable to so many strong and unanswerable Objections, that the Patrons of it can never give the least satisfactory Account of it; and therefore it has been long ago exploded by the Best Philosophers among the Heathens themselves, as a most irrational Imagination.

Thus do Fantastical Men run themselves into Labyrinths, by saying in their Hearts, *there is no God*, and yet would be thought the most knowing, and witty Philosophers: In short, out of a Principle of Affectation they dispute their Reason out of doors, and render all Speculations uncertain, and unsatisfactory; and all Accounts of the Appearances in Nature impossible to be believed; the Consequence whereof is, that the Intellectual Faculties of Mankind are deluded, and serve to no purpose; which if these Men would prove, might be for *them* the strongest Argument against a Deity, though it would be no Argument at all against *our Reason*, who believe, that the God of this World hath deluded and blinded their Eyes: For though every thing in Nature be a Witness of a Deity, yet the Mind of Men (when Uncorrupt) seems
to

to speak very home to us in this Respect among others, because it doth *easily* close with the Notion of a Divine Being over all, and finds it the only thing it can rest on with satisfaction, after all its flights abroad, and after all the strict Enquiries it has made into the Secrets of Nature. Those Plain-hearted People who follow the pure Dictates of Natural Reason, are never perplex'd with Philosophical Speculations, or uneasie by them, because they believe that God hath ordered all things ; and on This Principle the Phylosopher himself must rest at last, or else I do not see how 'tis possible for him to satisfie other Men or himself. Though Philosophy be a very Entertaining and Useful Science, and highly to be valued for the vast Treasure of Knowledge it brings to every Modest and Pious Man, yet it cannot serve sufficiently to answer one Doubt in a Thousand, without having recourse at every turn to the Supream and First Cause ; whose Works are the *Ground-work* of Philosophy, and whose Wisdom and Power is discover'd in his Works so gloriously. The great Business of Philosophy is, to shew us the Methods, the Courses, and the Effects of Nature,

Nature, and to find out the best Reasons of them which can be given. But, generally speaking, the very best Reasons are only Probabilities, witness those many *Disputes* which are throughout all *Natural* Philosophy : For we can't peep into the Inside of Nature, so as to discover it plainly ; the Springs whereby Nature moves, are Secret, and in the Dark ; and the Operations by which Nature so methodically Producess and Perfecteth her Effects, they are All mysterious ; so that our knowledge of those things is but conjectural : And therefore, after all our curious Contemplation, the most satisfactory Reason we can give in these Cases, is this, That God, who hath made all things in Number, Measure, and Weight, hath also established the whole Order of things by a perpetual Decree. This answers all manner of Doubts, because how Difficult and Intricate soever our Speculations are, it is most rational to believe, That a Being of Perfect Wisdom and Power, can order things which Creatures of Finite and Shallow Capacities cannot possibly comprehend.

C H A P. II.

I Have not yet taken notice of Man, the Principal Part of this visible World, and so admirably contrived, that 'tis an Astonishment to think with what face any one of that Frame can pretend to give a satisfactory and easie Account of *himself*, without reflecting upon those words of the Devout Psalmist, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*, Ps. 139.

Not to mention half those Particulars which render every Man a kind of Copy of the Universe in *Little*, these two Things in general are observable in the Structure of his Body, *viz.* the *Curiousness*, and the *Usefulness* of its several Parts: Both which are very rational Arguments of a most Artful Hand, and the most Excellent Wisdom.

1. And First, Let us take a short View of the *Curiousness* of the Parts of Humane Body; not that I pretend to treat you with an exact Description of things, which require the Dexterity of the most Inquisitive and Critical Anatomists to dissect: An Undertaking, which is above my Skill, and beyond my

my Profession; and that too, which would not be very necessary to my purpose; because *ordinary* and *common* Speculations of this kind are sufficient to convince People of uncaptivated Understanding, that the only satisfactory Account that can be given of a Man's Frame, is, by concluding it to be the Admirable Contrivance of a most Wise God. To shew this, methinks a bare Skeleton (as Nature hath set it together) is enough: For if we attentively consider, what a System of Bones supports, and helps us to move; the various Sinus's whereby they are receiv'd one into another; the Marrow which serves to moisten the Bones, to keep them the better from being brittle, and apt to be broken; the Cavities which contain the Oily Substance; the Pores which let in the Bloud-Vessels, for the Growth and Nourishment of the Bony Fabrick; the Musilaginous Glands, which serve to lubricate the Joints, and to render them the more fit for motion; the Muscles about the Bones, the Immediate Instruments we move by; the Tendons, which diffuse themselves through the Muscular Parts; the Gristles and Ligaments which tie the Bones together
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the faster in their several Articulations; and all this Curious Structure adorned with a *Periostium*, or Membrane, which Cloaths and Invests it, to strengthen the whole, and to convey Spirits and Vitality to the whole: I say, if we lay all these Things together, and seriously consider them, we may well think those Men to be of very hardy Minds, who dare attribute this admirable Contrivance to any Original Cause, but the stupendious Skill of a Divine and most Intelligent Being.

To carry on this Argument, I might speak particularly of the several Bones of the Skull, which are to defend the Throne of the Soul from Violence and Rudeness, and which are firmly united by curious Seams or Sutures; some Lineal and Plain; others Indented, like the Teeth of a Saw; by all, closed so fast together, that in Dissections, Instruments of Steel are employ'd, to disunite the several Bones on the Crown and side of the Head: Which delicate Workmanship, if Men will ascribe to bungling *Chance*, or to the Agency of an undesigning blind Cause, they may with far better Reason satisfy us, that the Roof and Walls, and Contiguations
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of a Noble Palace, are done without the Skill and Dexterity of an Artist.

Let us look next a little within the Inside of the Skull; And what can we see there, but the Print of a most Elegant and Divine Hand? When we consider the wonderful Frame and Contexture of the various Parts, and the Mysteriousness of the Whole; those accurate Membranes, which cloath the Brain, usually called the *Dura* and *Pia Mater*, with their innumerable Holes, thro' which great numbers of Nerves, Veins and Arteries do pass, and are dispersed for the Performance of their respective Offices; the *Substance* of the Brain, and its distinct Parts; with its different Colours, artificial Windings, I know not how many Glands, with Channels and Rivulets about them, together with a Complication of other Vessels, branching out into Fibres and Twigs without Number: Those Noble Elaboratories in the Brain, where the finer Particles of the Arterial Blood (forced into the Head by the constant Pulsations of the Heart) are sublimated and perfected out of Vital into Animal Spirits: Those stupendious Pairs of Nerves, which rise and spring out of
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the Brain, and run in infinite Branches, some to the outward Senses, to help the Hearing, Seeing, Smelling, and the like; and others down the Neck and Spine, and thence spread in numberless Fibres all over the Body, like Network, impossible to be imitated by the most exquisite Art, or the most curious Hand of Man; the constant, brisk Course of the Animal Spirits, through the Cavities and Pores of the Nerves over all, to maintain Nutrition, to foment and cherish every the least Member of the Body, to repair the daily Expences of Nature, and to render every Part the fitter for Motion: In short, the Formation of the Inward Parts of a Man's Head is such, that though the Works in it are Regular and Orderly, Stable, Fixt, and Uniform, in all Men, yet they are so Elegant and Curious also, that it hath confounded and non-plust the Wits of the most Inquisitive and Diligent Artists, to give us a plain and certain Account of the Structure; and 'tis well observed by an Ingenious and Elaborate Writer, That a true Anatomy of the Brain, as to its Contiguities, Connexions, Cavities, Ventricles, &c. must needs be very difficult; so that

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'tis no Wonder, that the Observations of Anatomists are so *different* and so *opposite* to one another. To which we may add the exact and exquisite Formation of every Part in the several *Sensories*; This is most discoverable in the *Eye*, that wonderful Instrument of Sight, which any reasonable and sober Person may well think God gave us chiefly, that thereby we might the more easily observe in the whole Frame of Nature, the manifold Evidences of his Glorious Wisdom, Power, and Goodness; With what Admiration may you behold the most Artificial and Curious Formation of this little, but Noble Part, which serves for Vision, if you Critically observe the Frame of it? The several Muscles, which move the Eye towards all Points in the Universe; the Veins, Arteries, Fibres, Glands, and Lymphæducts, which attend the Muscles; the excellent Contexture of the Optick Nerve, which shoots into the bottom of the Eye; the several Tunics or Coats, which are woven from that Nerve; that Astonishing Structure which is within those Coats; the Pupil, which intromits the Sight; the Hairy Circle, which is about it, to di-

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late or contract it, as the Light is less or greater ; and within all these, those three Nice Contrivances, the Watery, Chrystalline, and Vitreous Humours, which refract the Light, so that the Idea's of the Visible Object are at last regularly carried to the Phancy in the Brain, there for the Soul to judge of the Colour, Figure, Site, and Magnitude of the Object? In short, the Fabrick of the Eye is so Elegant and Mathematical, that it may be questioned, whether (considering the small Compass of it) there be such another Admirable Contrivance in the whole Visible World besides, though it self sees daily every where Wonders upon Wonders ; And to what but a Divine Power can we rationally ascribe the fine Contexture of *Sinews*, which arising from the Head all manner of Ways, and spreading all about into Threads innumerable, reach to every the least Part of the Body, and help to cloath and invigorate the Whole ? To what, but the Hand of God, can we ascribe the Artificial Membranes of the Gullet, the several Coats of the Stomach, with the various Fibres in them ; the Situation and Structure of the Two

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Orifices of it, and the Circular Fibres about them, to contract the Passages thereof, the better to promote the Work of Concoction? To what, but the same Hand, can we ascribe the next Manufacture, a long Train of winding Bowels, incompass'd and held together in a Circle by the Mesentery, and all made up of Membranes, Veins, Arteries, Fibres, Valves, Glands, Lymphæducts; a great heap of stupendious Mysteries, which the nice Curiosity of these latter Ages have discover'd to the World? To what other Cause can we, with any sort of Satisfaction, ascribe the exquisite Frame of that Vital Part, which serves for Breathing? The Artificial Membranes and Cartilages which make and adorn the Wind-pipe; the manifold Branches of it, which are dispersed up and down the Contexture of the Lungs; the greater and lesser Lobes, which constitute the Pendulous Body; the Blood Vessels, Nerves, Bladders, and Lymphæducts, which belong to it; and all these, assisted by the constant Motion of that Muscular Part, the Midriff, whereby the Salutary Air is received into the Lungs, and then driven out for a fresh Supply? To what,

what, but the Skill of a most Provident and Artful Being, can we rationally ascribe the noble Fabrication of that Fountain of Life, the *Heart* ; the Laver or Case about it, and the Liquid Matter therein, to keep the Heart moist, and to assist the Vital Motion ; the two Ears, (with their Fibres and Valves) which are appendant to this Vital Part, and which open and shut, as the Heart is to receive the Blood on the Right Side, and to throw it out on the Left ; the Situation of the Heart, about the middle of the Breast, for the better distribution of the Blood into all Parts of the Body ; the delicate Skin, that doth closely invest it, with the Variety of Veins, Arteries, and Nerves, which are its Embroideries ; the two Cavities or Ventricles, which are *within* the Heart, the one, for Reception, the other, for Expulsion of the Spirituous, Vital Liquor ; the Partition-Wall of Flesh between those two Ventricles ; the wonderful Set of small Fibres in each Ventricle, which serve for the Pulsation of the Heart, and on which the whole Life of Man depends ? Who, I say, can with true Reason ascribe this fine and wise Structure, but to a most Intel-

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ligent and Gracious Being, called God; especially if we consider, how the Structure riseth, and grows to its Perfection, from so slender an Original, a very small Red Speck, called the *Punctum Salens*, or the Stirring Point, which is just discernable in an Embryo in the Womb, and yet is the Rudiment of the whole Body; the mean, poor Foundation of all that System of Flesh, Bones, and Blood, on which nice People bestow so much Care, Cost, and Time?

'Twere endless to Instance in all Particulars; and therefore, in short, could a Man critically and thoroughly examine every the least Ingredient of his Constitution, and would fairly observe the curious Fineness that is throughout the whole, from Head to Foot; I am apt to think, he will need no other Argument to convince him of the Reasonableness of believing the Existence of an Intelligent and Good Deity, besides the Testimony of his own Senses.

2. And yet, besides the *Curiousness*, I promised to take some Notice also of the *Useful* Nature of the Parts of Humane Body; which shews, that the Author of our Natures is not only a
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most Intelligent Architect, but a most Benign and Provident Being, that intended his Workmanship for excellent Ends and Purposes.

Upon which Subject I must be the more concise, because I have already mentioned the Uses and Offices of divers Particulars: I could not well avoid it; and to make some Amends, a more *General* Account of them shall be given now.

We will begin where we left off, at the Origin and Spring of Life, the Heart. 'Tis certain, that the Blood is the Vehicle and Preservative of Life; and therefore the Great Work of Nature is, to prepare the Blood, and then to disperse it into all the Parts of the Body, that the whole may be sustained in a good condition. And the Perpetual *Motion* of the Heart is for this End and Use; though the best Anatomists have ingenuously confess'd, That it is too hard for any Man throughly to understand the original, certain Cause of this Perpetual Motion, and that 'tis the Prerogative of God alone, who searcheth the Secrets of the Heart, to know any other Cause of it, besides the Impress his own Hand hath made upon
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the Heart it self; yet the *Ends* and *Uses* of this Motion are known to be these Five :

First, That by the *Diaſtole*, or opening of the Heart, it may admit the white digeſted Maſs, called the *Chyle*, which is the nourishing Part of our Meat and Drink.

Secondly, That it may by degrees help to transform the *Chyle* into an Hot, Red Maſs, by incorporating it into the other Blood.

Thirdly, That by the *Syſtole*, or Conſtriction of the Heart, that is, the *Pulſe*, it may gradually throw out the whole Maſs, the more volatile Parts of it to the Head, through the aſcending Trunk of that noble Artery, call'd the *Aorta*; and the more heavy Parts, into all the Inferior Members, by the deſcending Trunk of it.

Fourthly, That a conſtant and brisk Circulation of the Blood may be maintain'd, the ſubſequent Vital Substance ſtill forcing and driving on the former. And,

Fifthly, That by this Circular Progreſs of the Blood, there may be drain'd off into proper Veſſels, thoſe intermingled Humours which are Noxious

xious to the Body. For these several Purposes, the Figure, the Nerves, the Flesh, the Fibres, the Tendons, the Core, the Basis, the Cisterns, and all the Parts and Appendages of the Heart, are so Fram'd and Order'd, that they necessarily and naturally serve for these Ends, nor are they suppos'd to serve for any other: Of all which, no satisfactory Account can be given, but that they were contrived and intended on purpose for those Ends and Uses, by a most Intelligent, Wise, and Good Being, superior to all Blind, Senseless, and Stupid Matter.

To go on; The more Volatile Parts of the Blood being thrown into the Head, the Office and Use of the *Brain* thereupon is Twofold:

First, To work upon the Spirituous Particles, and (as in an Elaboratory) to sublimate and refine them, so as to improve and heighten them, by wonderful Chymistry, out of meer Vital Spirits, into those Brisk and most Active Ones, which are usually called Animal.

Secondly, To dispatch, by the Energy of the Soul, the Refined Spirits, into all other Parts of the Body; some, to the Sensories, to return to the Soul the
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Qualities and Similitudes of outward Objects, which are apprehended by the Sight, Hearing, Feeling, Smelling, and Tasting, that the Soul may be forewarn'd, how to stand upon the Defence of Life; others are sent into the Inferior Parts, to support the several Functions of the whole; Those, into the more External Muscles, to serve for Local and Spontaneous Motion; and these, into the more Inward Parts, to maintain them in their natural, proper Operations, Powers, and Faculties; that every Particle, under the Soul's Government, may do its respective Office, and serve for its respective Use.

Thus some Animal Spirits are transmitted into the Stomach, to excite the Appetite for Food; to cause Concoction; and to reduce the concocted Matter into course Chyle; some, into the Bowels, there to separate the finer Parts of the Chyle from Dross, by a gradual Motion through the Meanders and Windings of the Intestines; some, into the Mesentery, to carry off the separated Chyle into a common Receptacle; whence it is conveyed by divers Passages into the Ventricles of the Heart, there to be assimilated with the
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circulated Blood, and thence to be thrown out, and to undergo a new Circulation with it ; to help repair the continual Expences of our frail and fading Nature.

And what shall I say of those Parts, which, in this quick Circulation, *assist* and perform their respective and proper Offices, for the Health and Preservation of the Whole ? As, The *Lympha*, which serves to attenuate the Blood, to expedite its Motion ; The *Glands*, which imbibe the Moisture ; The *Lymphæducts*, which convey it into the Veins ; The *Valves*, in the Veins, which keep the Blood from recoyling ; The *Kidneys*, which draw off the Watry Part ; And the *Liver*, which throw out the Cholerick Humour ; that what is Gross or Feculent, a Nufance or Superfluity, may be done away ? It would be an endless thing to reckon the Functions of all Particulars : In short therefore, if you search nicely into the Structure of Humane Body, you will find there is not the least part of it, but what has its Office and Use ; so that the existence of a Provident and Benign Deity being supposed, *Scepticks* themselves must needs own, that our Admirable
Frame

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Frame is a Piece of Architecture, very *becoming* Divine Wisdom : Nor can any other Satisfactory Account be given of it, but this, That God hath made it so.

And here I would propose one Running Thought to the Consideration of all the Learned Physicians and Anatomists in the World ; even those, who insist most upon the Mechanism of a Humane Body. Suppose all the Parts of a Body were perfectly form'd, and made ready to their Hands, so that nothing were wanting but a Soul to give them Energy and Vigour ; suppose this all lay before them severally, Part by Part, Bowels, Bones, Membranes, Ligaments, Cartilages, Vitals, Brains, Arteries, Veins, Nerves, Fibres, Tendons, Glands, Muscles, and the rest, to the very outward Skin ; Could they think it possible for them with all their Art, Dexterity, and Skill, to put all these Parts together into one Frame, as they are now ? To Order and Range them after the same manner they are in now ? To Fit and Fix them, as they are now, for their several Uses, (when at last animated by a supernatural Cause ?) And then to wrap up all, and cover
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all, so that the goodly Structure may hold and continue, as now, a Firm, Useful Fabrick for Fourscore, or perhaps for an Hundred Years? No Man can be so ridiculously Absurd as to think this possible for them; much less can they imagine it possible for them, with their own Hands, to *Prepare, Form, and Fashion* the several Parts of Humane Body; to give them their first Rudiments; and by degrees to bring them, as they are now, to Perfection: Nor (though we should suppose all this done for them) could they conceive it possible for them, to set Nature at work, to give it the first successful Stroke, and to endue the Blood with a Circulating Motion: For though the Heart be the main Spring and Wheel that moves all the rest; yet, as far as I perceive, none can tell us, what the Natural Cause is (if there be any) which moves the Heart it self: Though some impute it to the Influx of the Animal Spirits; others, to the Accension and Rarefaction of the Blood; yet both these are discovered to be false Accounts, and other Reasons are so Poor and Conjectural only, and so Meanly thought of, that some of the
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most Nice and Inquisitive Anatomists have ingenuously confess'd their own Ignorance of the Reason of so admirable an Action, and (as I observed before) have owned it to be too hard a Matter for a Man to conceive of, and that 'tis the Prerogative of God only, who searcheth the Secrets of the Heart, to know the true Reason of its Motion: *In him we live, move, and have our Being*, saith the Scripture; and after all Disputes, that is the only satisfactory Account that can be given of this Matter, and indeed of the whole Frame, and of all the Operations of our Nature. For (that I may raise an Argument out of the premised Consideration) can any Man of common Sense think to convince me, that what surpasses all Humane Art and Skill to do, and all Humane Curiosity to discover, is to be ascribed to meer Chance? Especially in so great a Case, where every thing is so Constant and Orderly, Uniform and Regular, and which serves for the Support of all Mankind, and for the Propagation of all Mankind from one Generation to another? Indeed Art comes *short* of Nature, but it ever *mends* Chance; And can we Rationally think,
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that Things *above* the reach of Art, are done by the contingent, accidental Concretion of senseless, bungling Atoms? And that, indifferently, and equally too, throughout the whole Species of Mankind? and all this, without the Guidance of a most Wise and Good Being over all? When you examine a Clock or a Watch, and observe the main Spring, the Wheels, and all the Movements, together with the Uses they serve for, you must necessarily conclude, that those curious Works did not make themselves, nor were made by chance, nor set together by mere hap-hazard, but were formed and contrived by an Intelligent and Skilful Artist, who *intended* and *designed* them for such and such a Use: In like manner, when you examine the several Parts of Humane Body, and observe how delicately they are Fashion'd, how orderly they are Rang'd, how appositely they are Plac'd and Fix'd, and how constantly they discharge their Functions and Offices for the mutual Benefit of each other, and for the Preservation of the whole; you must naturally infer, that this noble Fabrick could not be erected by it self, nor put together by a confounded Jum-

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ble of senseless, liveless, and blind Atoms; but that it is the Contrivance of a most Wise and Good Being, who made them on purpose to serve for beneficial Ends and Purposes. To evade the Force of this Argument, the *Epicurians* are wont to say, That these Parts of ours were not Originally made and intended *for* such and such Uses, but that afterward by good Luck the Uses of them were found out and discover'd; and that then, the Man apply'd them to those Uses: As, say they, the Eye was not *design'd* for Seeing, nor the Ear for Hearing, nor the Feet for Walking; but that finding by Experience, that we *do* See with our Eyes, and *do* Hear with our Ears, and *do* Walk upon our Feet, therefore we do *prudently* make use of those Parts for those Purposes; though they were not *intended* for them. but made casually: To which Ridiculous Evasion I Reply in short;

First, That by Parity of Reason they may say, That Spectacles and Microscopes were not *Intentionally* made to help the Sight; nor *Otacousticons* to help the Hearing; nor Wooden Legs to help the Thighs to move from Place to

Place; but that all *these* too were made Casually, and without Design; for which odd Fancy, every Artificer will justly call them Fools.

Secondly, That there are some Parts within us, the particular Uses whereof are not yet *plainly* discovered; and therefore can't be supposed to be applied to their Uses by any Voluntary Act of ours: And yet it is certain, that all the Parts are so Useful in their Kinds and Places, that supposing a Deity to have made them, we cannot imagine, how Divine Wisdom it self could have contrived better and fitter for their Ends and Purposes: So that (to conclude the whole Point briefly) considering the Exquisite *Curiosity* of our Structure, and the Admirable *Usefulness* of its Parts, no Rational Man can give a Clear, Easy, and Satisfactory Account of it, but this, That we are the Workmanship of G O D; and therefore, that the Belief of the Existence of a Provident Deity, is most Agreeable to Reason.

C H A P. III.

Hitherto I have said nothing of our Souls, nor shall I be prolix upon this Subject now, because I have Particularly considered it in my former Discourse concerning the Existence of God; therefore to avoid now Philosophical Notions, and a tedious Repetition of Notions relating to the Immateriality and Immortality of this Divine Part of Man; I shall only do these two things,

First, I shall consider, what we may observe, feel, and are conscious of, by daily experience, concerning this Inward, Noble Part of Humane Nature, and what may be Rationally gather'd from our Experience; And then,

Secondly, Enquire, Whether any Fair, Satisfactory Account can be given of this Excellent Part; without believing it to be the Production of a most Perfect Being; the Author of all our Faculties; an Omnipotent, Incomprehensible Spirit, whom we call God?

I. What

1. What we may observe, find, feel, and are conscious of, by daily Experience, concerning this Inward, Noble Part of our Nature. Now this we find in *Fact* ; First, That there is within us, a Stirring, Busie, and Projecting *Being*, which gives birth to a Multitude of Inward Motions and Secret Operations, which none is conscious of but ones self; and this *Being* is called *Soul*, or *Mind* : We find too, that these Motions and Operations are quite Different things from those Actions and Workings which the Body hath an hand in; Springing, and, as it were, Bubbling, out of the Mind, we know not how; and many times on a sudden, and without Labour, Design, or Contrivance; which Motions and Operations are called, *Cogitations*, or *Thoughts* : We find also, that in *Thinking*, we discover, by the sagacious Power and Faculty of the Mind within us, the plain *Differences* of Objects that are without us, and that lie Present before our outward Senses; as, That this thing is a Stone, and that Flesh; this Wood, and that Iron: And these distinct Conceptions are called, *Inward Sensation*. We find likewise, that besides this Power of *discerning* and

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distinguishing sensible Objects that are *present*, the Mind hath a Faculty of framing Numberless Images and Representations of things at a vast *distance*, both as to Place and Time; as of Men, Countries, Towns and Actions; nay *Artificial* Representations of things that never were in Being, as of Centaurs, Chimæras, Golden Mountains, and the like impossible Phantasms: And this is the Power of *Imagination*. Moreover, we find the Mind hath a Power of Apprehending and Closing with certain *Common Principles* and *Notional Maxims*, which do not fall under our Outward Senses, and are therefore called, not *Sensible* but *Intelligible* Truths; because they are proper and peculiar Objects of the Mind; as, that Nothing can come out of Nothing; that a Thing cannot Be, and yet not Be at the same time; that Nothing can Act, before it doth Exist; that Two Things that agree in One Third, must agree among themselves; that Equals added to Equals, must make Equals; and many more such General and Self-evident Notions: And this is the Power of the Mind, which is usually stiled, The Faculty of *Understanding*, or *Knowing*. We find
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still, that the Mind hath a Power of *Considering*, and by comparing one *Thing* with another, and one *Notion* with another, a Power of *Determining* what is True, and what is False; and a Power of forming Propositions accordingly; as, by comparing a Whole with a Part, it determines that the Whole is greater than a Part; by comparing both Parts of a Contradiction, the Mind determines, that one Part is certainly false; by comparing the Effect with the Cause, it determines, that in order of Nature the Cause is *Antecedent* to the Effect; and this Power of the Mind is the *Power of Judging*. We find further, that the Mind of Man hath a Power, not only of forming Propositions out of Principles, but also of drawing, by necessary Inference and Connection, one Proposition out of another, and so on, to a great length; as thus: Because Nothing can come *out* of Nothing, therefore *Something* did Exist before any Thing else had a Being; otherwise there could be no Being yet, and consequently that this World could not have existed at all; because the Effect in order of Nature is subsequent to its Cause, therefore no Effect can be the

Cause of its Self; and consequently, that every Thing was made by some Being that did Exist before any Thing else was. There are infinite Evidences of the Power of the Mind to this purpose, and this is called the *Faculty of Reasoning*. Further yet, we find the Mind of Man hath a Power of framing *new* Conceptions of Things we did many Years ago; perhaps in our Childhood, of the Company we were then in, of the Circumstance of *Time* and *Place*, which did attend our Actions; and this Power is called *Memory*. And yet to go on; We find the Mind hath a Power of *Directing* the Actions we are about, and of informing us what Actions are good to be done, and what Evil Actions are to be avoided; and accordingly our Minds do, when the Actions are over, either Comfort us for doing well, or Afflict us for having done amiss: And this is the Power of *Conscience*; and as it Comforts or Afflicts, so 'tis a Good or Evil Conscience. We find moreover, that there are incident to the Mind various *Impressions*, according to the Variety of Objects that affect us, whether they be Sensible or Intelligible Objects; which Impres-
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sions occasion various *Motions*, as it were *Ebullitions* of the Mind, such as Anger, Love, Desire, Joy, Fear, Grief, Hope, &c. And these are the *Affections* or *Passions* of the Soul. Again we find, there is a Commanding, Arbitrary Faculty of the Mind, whereby it Governs at pleasure, not the Body only, but the other Faculties and Powers of the Soul too; so that, by Virtue of this Power, we Stir or Walk when we please; which way we please, and as long as we please; we Think as we please; we fancy Things a great way off, or done a great while ago, as we please; we Meditate, Study, form Propositions, use Arguments, infer Conclusions, as we please, we are *Intent* upon Notions, or lay them aside, as we please; we *Check* and *Rule* our Passions, or give them the Rein, as we please; and this Imperious and Sovereign Faculty is called the *Will*. Once more, we find, that though the Mind may be Flatter'd, Allured, and Perswaded to Act; yet it cannot be *Forc'd* or *Constrain'd* by any created Being, to use its Faculties any otherwise than its Self listeth, but is at Liberty within its Self, an Independent Being, not beholding to any Creature
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for the Exercise of its Powers: And this is called its *Self-Activity*.

All these Things we feel, and find by our daily Experience; and from this Experience we rationally gather, that the Mind of Man is, 1. First, a *Real* Being; for 'tis a Self-evident Principle of Reason, that Nothing can't Act, but every Thing must Exist before it can Operate. 2. That this Being is a *Spiritual* Substance: For though we cannot *feel* the *Nature* of the Soul, as we feel its *Operations*, yet it must be a *Spirit*, because it is Self-Active and Powerful; it being impossible for Matter, as such, to Act of its Self alone, without a Push or Stroke from something else, which is Foreign to it; and that this Spirit must be a *Substance* also, because 'tis a Being that doth subsist by its Self, and *supports* those Powers, Faculties, and Properties, which are Essential to it.

To explain this Matter a little: When I distinguish the Powers of the Mind, from the Mind it self, I do not mean, that they are *distinct* from it in Fact and Reality, as the Branches of a Tree are distinct Things from the Trunk; but the Distinction is only Notional, and Suppos'd, for Perspicuity-sake; as when
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we distinguish between Matter, and its several Qualities, Figure, Colour, &c. they are only several Words for the same thing; for 'tis only *Qualified Matter*: For Instance; when we distinguish between the Motions of the Blood in the Veins, and the Blood its self, we mean the very Blood *moving*; so when we distinguish between the Operations of the Mind, and the Mind its self, we mean the very Mind operating, and acting variously, according to the variety of Objects it occasions; and these Operations being so many Qualities and Modifications of the Mind, must be supposed to have something, as it were, *under* them, in the nature of a *Substratum*, which serves to exert them; and this is called *Substance*, because the Operations depend upon it, but *its Self* doth not depend upon the Operations, but is really the *Cause* of them; so that the Notion of the Mind is this, That it is a *Thinking Substance*. When we think of a *Corporeal Object*, we conceive it to be something that is endued with such and such Qualities, as Extension, Figure, Colour, &c. And as we conclude it to be a Substance, because we cannot conceive how these Qualities could subsist alone,

alone, or in one another, but must suppose them to exist, and to be supported by one Common Subject ; in like manner, when we think of ones Soul or Mind, we conceive it to be something that is indued with such and such Powers of Knowing, Deliberating, Judging, &c. and we conclude it be a *Substance*, because we cannot conceive, how these Powers could exist of themselves, or in one another, but must suppose them to exist in, and to be supported by, one Vital Spirit: This is so plain, that a very elegant and nice Writer hath proved, That we have as clear a Notion of the Nature and Substance of the Mind, as we have of a Body ; because a Body is supposed to be a *Substratum* to those Qualities we discern from without, and the Mind is supposed to be a *Substratum* to those Operations which we experiment within our selves.

Secondly, These plain Things being premised, let us consider now in the next place, Whether a fair Satisfactory Account can be given of this Noble Operative Being, the Mind, (a Spiritual Substance, thus endued with such various Powers and Operations as we
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feel, and are acting after such a various manner) without deriving it from a Divine Communicative Being over all, which we call GOD, and is the Author of our whole Nature. Those Infidels I am dealing with, following (a great way) the Principles of *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and *Lucretius* abroad, and chiefly the Doctrines of an Infamous Atheist at home, they give us this Account: 1. That the Mind or Soul of Man is nothing but an Accidental Modification of *Matter* within him, or the Material Parts of his *Brain*, a Modification casually resulting from the Contexture and Combination of Atoms, as is the Contexture of a Stone, a Stump, or a Wall; only that these Atoms are more delicate and fine: For as they disown all Conceptions of Things which have not been first perceived by *Sense*, or are subject to *Sense*; so they disown all *Substance*, which is not Matter or Body; telling us, that Substance and Body signify the same thing; and that Substance Incorporeal are Words which, when joined together, destroy one another; as if a Man should say, an Incorporeal Body; upon which Principle, they despise all Notions

tions of an Incorporeal Deity, and of an Incorporeal Soul. 2. They reckon, that there are beside, other Concretions of Atoms within us, (*viz.*) those subtil Aërial Particles, of the Blood, we call Spirits Animal, and that by this brisk Motion of the Animal Spirits, there are excited *necessarily* in us Thoughts, and a Train of Thoughts; and consequently, that there are form'd in us those Accomplishments of the Mind which we call Virtues, as well Intellectual as Moral: And all this, by mere dead Matter, and necessary Motion, which they call *Mechanism*. 3. They reckon, That besides this violent Mob of Atoms *within* the Man, there are more Combinations of Atoms as violently acting upon the Organs of Sense *without*; either Corporeal *Effluvioms* and Images arising continually from the Surface of Corporeal Objects washing into the Brain through the Nerves; or, a *Commonwealth* of Particles pressing very hard upon the Organs, and communicating their Motion to the Brain; so that by the Tension of the Air, and Pressure of the Particles, and the Vibration of the Nerves, the Phancy is affected, so that it touches and feels the distant

distant Object, as it were, by a Staff.
4. They reckon, That in these Contextures of Atoms, thus forcibly Acting, whether in the inward, or upon the outward Parts of Man, there is nothing of Understanding, Sense, or Life; nothing of Deliberation, Choice, or inward Self-Activity; but that they are forcibly moved too by other Atoms as unknown, inanimate, and stupid as themselves, like Motes hurried up and down in the Air, or tumbling about in the Sun-beams; or like Tennis-balls, struck and toss'd at all Adventures. This is the concise Account given by this very odd sort of Infidels, concerning the Rational Soul of Man; and I have fairly represented it out of their own Writings; and any sober Person, that will give due Attention to his own Mind, may easily look upon their whole Hypothesis to be nothing less than (I will not say, Dotage, but) Delirancy, and Madness; and that to use many Arguments against it, is like Disputing at *Bedlam*; for can any Man in his right Senses believe, that that vigorous, restless, and masterly Being within him, his Soul, is a meer Figment, made up naturally of such senseless, liveless
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Matter, as constitutes a Lump of Lead, or a Clod of Clay? Can he imagine, that such an unactive, unknowing, inanimate Thing as bare Matter is, (however modifi'd) as lifeless as a Stone; can, I say, any Rational Man be satisfi'd, that it is such a Being, endued with such Powers and Abilities, as we find by Experience our Souls actually have? Abilities to Cogitate, to Consider, to Judge, to Reason, and to Remember? Abilities to Doubt, to Dispute, to Fear, to Hope, and to Exert all other such-like Passions? Abilities to Reflect upon its own Thoughts, to Compare its Conceptions with one another, and to Distinguish Truth from Falshood, and Good from Evil? Abilities to Conceive of many Things which are not subject to our Senses; to Form Propositions, to Infer Conclusions, to Invent Arts, to Methodize and Improve Sciences, to Draw Schemes of Philosophy of all sorts, Natural, Moral, Mathematical, and Metaphysical; to Compile Histories; to Lay down Politicks; and, in short, to Give Laws and Measures for the Government of the World, as well Publick States and Kingdoms, as Particular Societies, and Private Families;

lies; Can any Man of Common Reason be satisfied, that Souls, furnished with such Abilities as these, can be made up of Stupid Atoms? A dead heavy Lump, as void of Sense and Life, as a Rock? By the *General* Air and Appearance of the Phancy, it must needs be concluded to be a Thing impossible. But to be a little Particular and Distinct: Let us consider, whether any reasonable Man can be satisfied with the Account these Men give, either of the *Nature* of a Humane Soul, or of its *Operations*.

I. First, as touching the *Nature* of the Soul: We must conclude it to be a quite *different* Thing from the Matter, because we have quite different *Conceptions* of it; for we must conclude upon the different *Natures* of Things, from the different Conceptions we have of them, else there can be no distinct Knowledge of any Thing: As we conclude a Man to be a different Thing from a Wall, and Water to be a different Thing from Fire, because we have *different* Apprehensions, Idea's, and Conceptions of these Things. Now what do we conceive of Matter? Why thus much; That it is a Bulky Substance
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of Cohering Parts, one without another; that it is extended to such a Length, Breadth, and Thickness; that it is of such a Shape and Position; that it resteth in such a Place, or changeth its Place when it is forcibly moved: This is all we can conceive of Matter (*viz.*) Cohesion of Parts, Extension, Figure, Situation, Rest, and Motion. And what now do we conceive of a Soul? Why thus much; That it is a lively, active Thing within us; That it thinks, and Considers, whether we See, Hear, or Feel any Thing *without* us or no; that it entertains us with Notions, not only of Things which now are, but which have been, or which are possible to be; that it is Conscious of its own Thoughts, Reflects upon them, and Examines them; that it is apt to *Assent* to this Proposition as *True*, to *Contradict* that as *False*, to *Suspend* its Belief of a Third as *Doubtful*, and to surmise a Fourth to be probable; that it is apt to apprehend this Thing to be for our Profit or Delight, and that to be Hurtful, and accordingly to direct us to Follow after the one, and to Avoid the other; that it is apt to *Sting* and *Lash* us when we Disobey its Dictates;

Dictates; that it is at Liberty to Act, or not to Act, and to Act this way or that, as it thinks it best; that it is apt to search into the Appearances of all outward Objects by a Judiciary Power of its own, and where the Senses are deceiv'd, to discover the Imposture, and to rectifie the Imagination; that throughout the whole Series of its Meditations and Reasonings, it hath an Energetick vigorous Faculty that is Connatural to it, which no Matter is supposed to have; that its Thoughts are not *divisible* into several Parts, as the Substance of all Matter is; and that its Actions are impossible to be *measured* by Yards, Feet, or Inches, as the Parts of Matter are. From all which we must rationally infer, that the Conceptions we have of a Soul being so utterly *different* from those Conceptions we have of Matter, their *Natures* must needs be concluded to be utterly *different*; otherwise we shall confound all Natures, and have as much Reason to say, that a Man is a Stone, as that the Soul of a Man is Matter. Besides, whereas fanciful Men would have us believe, that the *Thoughts* of a Soul are only, the various *Modes* of Matter; a most Learned Writer hath

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well observed, That a *Mode* is such a Thing, as cannot possibly be conceived without that whereof 'tis made; as Standing, Sitting, Kneeling, and Walking, cannot be conceived without a Body Organiz'd; but Life and Cogitation may be conceived, and easily apprehended, without apprehending *Matter*, or any thing of Extension; nor indeed can a Thought be conceived to be of such a Length, Breadth, or Thickness, or to be hew'd and sliced out into many Pieces, all which laid together, as so many small Chips thereof, would make up again the entireness of that whole Thought: From whence it ought to be concluded, That Cogitation is no Accident or Mode of *Matter*, or of bulky Extension, but a Mode and Attribute of another Substance, really *distinct* from Matter; I mean, a Substance Incorporeal, or else 'tis impossible to give a clear or satisfactory Account of the Soul's *Nature* to any Man, whose Reason is Debauch'd or Adulterated by wilful Prejudice. For according to the Infidels Account, a Man is nothing but a sort of Machin; and what we call Mind or Soul, is only an Accident and Mode of Matter, arising from

a Particular Contexture and Combination of Atoms in the Blood and Brain; and though by good Luck it be qualified with a pretty Art of Thinking, yet still it is but a *Quality*, and a Quality that is *Destroyable*, as the Colour and Figure of a Piece of Wax is; so that when the Man Dies, and the Compages of Atoms is *Dissolved*, there is an end of this Thinking business; no Immortal Life is left, no Immortal Soul remains, but all of it is Gone, and Lost, and reduced into *Nothing*, as the Colour and Figure of Wax is Destroyed, when the substance of the Wax is Melted and turned into Smoak. Now, whether this Account can Justifie any Reasonable Person, must be left to all Impartial Men to Judge. Opiniansers indeed think it an Ingenious Artifice, to Destroy the the Old Schemes of the Universe, and to Contrive a New one; nay, to Annihilate our Rational Souls, and to give us others for them; but I hope all considerate People will not easily be persuaded, to Undervalue so Great a Blessing they have received at the Hands of a Good Deity; nor to part with an Immortal Spirit for a Stupid Machin.

A Discourse concerning

2. Let us next consider the Account given by these wonderful Men, of the Soul's *Operations*. The Soul (say they) being made up of Corporeal Atoms, it cannot possibly move it self; but is moved by the strong Impulse of other Corporeal Atoms (suppose, the Animal Spirits in the Blood:) and this Motion (as they conceive) produceth Feats, which we Honour with the Name of Thoughts, Reasonings, Speculations, Memory, Mental Discourse, and the like; but that all this while it is nothing but Local Motion in the organick Parts of Mans Body, as an Atheistick Author tells us; meaning, such a violent Motion, as is imparted by the Racket to a Tennis-ball. And to the same purpose the same Author tells us elsewhere, that Knowledge and Understanding is nothing but a Tumult in the Mind, raised by External things, that press the organick Parts of Mans Body (*Leviathan*, pag. 31.) But how is this Imaginable? for according to their own avowed Doctrines, all Atoms are utterly devoid of all Life, Cogitation, Understanding and Sense; therefore they cannot produce that which is not virtually in themselves; for no Effect can Transcend the

the Power of its Cause; if it should, it would so far upon that respect make it self without any Cause, or without a sufficient Cause; and this would be to produce something out of nothing, which none but an Omnipotent Power can do; and these Men insist vehemently upon it, as absolutely impossible: Nay, it would produce one of the Highest and most Noble of Created Beings out of nothing. To use the Words of a most Learned Writer; Life, Cogitation, and Understanding, are things, which have more Real Entity and Higher Degrees and Perfections of Entity in them, than can be supposed to be in the Modes of Matter, such as Magnitude, Figure, Position, Motion, and Rest. All Cogitative Beings, especially Humane Souls and Personalities, are unquestionably Substantial (nay the most Perfect) things; and yet these odd pretenders to Philosophy, by bringing these things out of the Motion of bare, senseless Matter, do bring even themselves out of nothing, or Non-Existence, by reason that nothing of Cogitation did Exist in its supposed Cause; so that those very Men, who contend that Nothing can be made out

of Nothing, do themselves bring the most Excellent things out of Nothing, and Reduce them to Nothing again: According to whose Principles, as once there was no Life, nor Understanding at all in the Universe, so may there be None again. They who deny a God, because they suppose there can be no Creative Power belonging to any thing, do Themselves notwithstanding attribute to Matter (though a meer Passive, Sluggish, and Unactive, Senseless thing) a Creative Power of things Substantial, and Intellectual (as Humane Souls and Personalities (with all their Noble Operations) out of Nothing.

To confirm all this, let it be consider'd, whether Magnitude or Extension can produce a Thought? If it could, then would a Mountain be most Prolifick; nay, every dust of Matter would not be Barren. If Rest could produce Reasoning, why do not Stones Dispute and Argue? If Figure can produce Knowledge, why do not Circles, and Cubes, and Triangles become Mathematicians? If Situation can produce Understanding, why do not the Sun, Moon and Stars make us all know their Numbers, Magnitudes and Distances, and
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what things are Above them? These are all the Properties of Matter, excepting Motion; and conceive of that as you can, it is but Motion still: It may shift and be forced from Place to Place, but all the while it is but Matter moved, and you can no more produce a Mind out of the most violent Motion of a Body, than you can Grind a Rational Soul out of a Millstone; or Extract an Angel out of a burning Faggot-stick; for all this would be, to produce a Real Being, nay the most Perfect and Glorious Being in this World, from an Insufficient Cause, and out of a Non-Existing Power; that is, out of Nothing.

After all this, what Account do they give of those Operations of the *Will*, which we call Volitions; meaning those Efforts and Resolutions of the Mind, upon which we proceed to Action? Why, as to this there are Two Opinions among you, and both of them very Absurd (to say at present no more.) That old Athiest *Democritus*, would have all Humane Actions done Necessarily, by an Irresistable Impulse of Atoms upon the Mind, because he owned Nothing but Matter and Motion

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tion. His Follower, *Epicurus*, disliked this, lest he himself, with his Philosophy about him, should be looked upon as a stupid Machin, and a working Tool to his own Atoms, to be Govern'd and and Manged by them, as Men use an Artificial stalking-Horse; therefore He was for the *Liberty* of Mans *Will*. And what shift did he make to explain this upon the Grounds of his own Philosophy, that the Motions of Atoms are necessary? Why, his Fiction was this; That sometimes Atoms though Descending Perpendicularly upon the Mind, did nevertheless *Decline* from the Perpendicular; and that so the Will becomes Uncertain for a time what to do. Him followed that other Atheist, *Lucretius*, with his *Clinamen Principiorum*, or Declination of Atoms. But this Hypothesis (as *Cicero* observes *Lib de Fato*) would neither be allowed by any other Philosopher, nor could *Epicurus* himself be pleased or satisfied therewith; because it seemed Ridiculous to suppose Contingency, and a kind of Freewill, to be in Senseless Atoms, falling necessarily down by their own Natural weight; for this would imply the bringing of something out of Pre-existent

existent Nothing; or Liberty of Will out of necessary Motion. To Avoid this Ridiculous Absurdity, a late famous and cry'd-up Authour, the *Malmesbury Leviathan*, came with a very Bold Stroke, and determined the Point, That all Humane Actions are indeed Forced by an Aggregate and Impulse of External Causes; so that there is no Liberty in the *Will*, to Diliberate, or Choose what to do; but only a Power in the *Man* to *Act as his Will Forceth him, and as his Will it self is Forced by the Violent Motion of other Particles of Matter. Now, what Satisfaction can this Scheme of Mechanism give to any Sober Man, that will but hearken to his own Mind, and observe his own Actings? Two things are here fairly to be Objected, which I presume must hinder such a ones Satisfaction, and therefore will be concluded to be highly Unreasonable. 1. *First*, that according to this Doctrine, no more Liberty is allowed to that Noble Part of the Universe, Man, than what necessarily belongs to all Brute Beasts, which move by the strength of Phancy; nay, no more Liberty than what a Weather-cock enjoys, which moveth

as it is Forced by the Wind; no more Liberty than what every Shower of Rain hath, which falleth by the Heaviness of Condensed Vapours; nor any more Liberty than what is attributed to a Clock, which moveth by the Force of Springs and Weights; and consequently, that as to all our Actions there is no Room for Counsel, Wisdom, Deliberation, or Conduct; because all these Preparations for Action are in Vain, the Actions themselves being already Necessitated by an Agregate of External Causes; that is, by a Congeries of Atoms whisking about from the Brain, and agitated themselves by strong Pressures of outward Objects. Can this satisfy? 2. *Secondly*, this Doctrine opens a Door to all manner of Lewdness and Villany; and that in these 2 Respects.

1. Because it renders the most Heinous Actions Involuntary and Innocent, such as Murders, Parricides, Adulteries, Oppressions, Cruelties, and whatever else is Vile, Immoral, or Abominable: For if External Objects Force the Animal Spirits, and the Animal Spirits Force the Will, and the Will Forces the Man, how can he help it, and where is his Crime, and what need
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he Fear; especially if he has overmaster'd and cashier'd the Notions of an Immaterial and Immortal Soul, and of a Righteous God? For in all things (as they Think) they only Obey Sovereign Nature, follow the Conduct of Imperious Nature, and Act as Irresistible Nature compels them; so that we may wonder, that all Wretches who are Villanously Inclined, and understand the Principles of these Men, do not turn *Democriticks* and *Hobbists*; there being no Barbarities, but what may be Justified or Excused, on the score of Mechanism, and Natural Invincible Necessity. 2. The rather, Secondly, because according to the Principles of these Fanciful Men, there is nothing good or Evil Naturally, in it self, or by any Divine Law. For having once discarded all Notions of a Provident Deity, and, as it were, Thrown God out of the World, they cannot suppose any Notices of Right or Wrong to have been Derived from him; but do Feign all Men to have been Originally in a State of War; wherein every one had a Right to every Thing; till they all *Agreed* upon erecting a Civil Government; and then
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(say they) the Bounds and Differences were set out between Good and Evil, and, accordingly the Distinction came between Lawful and Unlawful ; between Virtue and Vice ; so that all this depends originally upon *Humane Constitutions*, and the *Positive Laws* of Society. Now, when all Humane Actions are supposed to be forced by the violence of External Causes, and every Thing is supposed to be in its own Nature Lawful, I would fain know, what can Hinder Men, so Principled, from committing any Outrages or Villanies in the World, if the Laws of a Nation do not forbid them, or if they can Skreen themselves from the Last of those Laws ? And consequently, how such Principles can satisfy any Reasonable Man ? No ; I fear this Account was devised for Licentiousness and Villany sake ; I am sure it directly serves to Encourage it. And this I take to be one Great Reason, why these and the like Principles have found such Entertainment among us. 'Tis not Reason or Philosophy that causeth it, (though that is pretended) but 'tis Impiety, Irreligion, Debauchery, and all sorts of Immorality and Roguery, that is at the Bottom : for
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that did not Vice and Wickedness carry them out, these Principles would find little Success, and very few Profelites. But Evil Inclinations will be served one way or other ; and if nothing else will do it, Infidelity and Atheism must ; there being nothing so Formidable to some Men, as the thoughts of a Just God, and an Immortal Soul.

To conclude this Consideration ; Man is made up of Two Different Parts, and those of Different Natures ; but Both united in the same Person. The one is Bulky Matter, with all those Properties and Qualities belonging to it, which belong to other Bodies ; and particularly, with a Capability of Moving, when it is Moved by something else, and not otherwise : The other Part is Soul ; a Being that can Move it self, and which is endued with such Properties and Qualities as are suitable to its Nature ; as, with a Power of Perceiving, Thinking, Judging, Reasoning, Remembring, Arguing, and the like. The Subject of these Properties, or that which is supposed to support them, must be concluded to be a True, Real, and Active Being, which is not
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Matter it self, nor the Effect of Matter: It cannot possibly be *Matter it self*, because there being nothing conceivable in Matter but Lump or Magnitude, and such other Dull Properties which are already mentioned; and these poor Qualities being Foreign to the Conceptions we have of a Soul, and quite Different things from the Notions we have of vigorous Activity, of Intellection, Reasoning, Volition, and divers other Properties which are Essential to a Soul, we must of necessity infer, that the Soul of Man is not a Material Accident of his Body, but a Substantial Being utterly *Distinct* from it, with Distinct Powers and Faculties within it self. And (as an Excellent Writer speaks) it is strange, that any Men should perswade themselves, that a Being which Rules and Commands in the Bodies of Men, moving them up and down, and hath Sense, Perception, and Rational Faculties in it, should not be as Substantial, as that stupid and senseless Matter, which is Ruled and Governed by it. 2. Nor, Secondly, can it be Reasonably thought to be the *Effect* or *Production* of Matter; because Matter it self is a meer Passive Lump,
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and therefore cannot produce Life, Activity, or so much as *One Thought*. For however the Particles of Matter are supposed to club and combine together, the whole Congeries or Heap of them is still but Matter, Uncapable of making up *Will* or *Understanding*. For nothing can naturally act beyond its own Powers; (supposing Matter to have a Power of Acting, which Naturally it hath not) it cannot *Give* or *Produce* what it hath not *Virtually* in it self; neither can an Effect transcend the Power and Virtue of its Cause, (no more than a Stream can rise higher, Naturally, than its Spring-Head:) Nor can such an Imperfect Thing as *Matter* is, produce a Thing of such Perfection as a *Mind* is of, to a very high Degree. In short, Mind being so far Above Matter, and the Power of a Deity being set aside, one of these Conclusions must follow; either that *Matter* produceth the Soul out of a state of utter Incapacity, that is, out of Nothing (which contradicts one certain Principle of Reason:) or else, that the Soul createth *it self* out of a state of Non-Existence; which is another Contradiction; because it sup-

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poseth the same Thing *Not* to Be, and yet to *Act* at the same time.

The Result of all is this, in short; that since the Souls of Men are substantial Beings, distinct from Matter, and therefore not Formable out of Matter, or Creatable by Atoms; the most satisfactory and easie Account to be given of them, is, That they are created by a most Perfect Mind, or Deity, from whom all Lives and Souls are derived. If (saith a Learned Author) no Life or Cogitation, Soul or Mind, can possibly spring out of Matter or Bodies devoid of Life and Understanding; and which is nothing but a thing extended into Length, Breadth, and Thickness; either all Lives and Souls were *Self-Existent* from Eternity, (which cannot be Reasonably thought) or else there must be one Perfect Unmade Life and Mind, from whence all Imperfect ones are derived. Since Humane Knowledge and Understanding is not a meer *Passion* impressed upon us from things existing *without* us, but the Operation of a Self-Active Mind *within*, this Mind can have no other Original than in way of Participation, from a most Per-
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fect Mind, a Mind of infinite Fecundity and Power, comprehending it self, and in it self all things ; so that were there no such Perfect and Powerful Being, there could not have been any Soul, Mind, or Understanding at all ?

Thus I have answer'd (I hope) the First Part of my Design ; which was to shew, that we ought to possess our Minds with a Firm and Immoveable Belief of a God over all, as being the most easie, clear, and satisfactory Account, consequently the most *Rational* Account that can be given both of the Appearances which are in the common World, and of the Fine and Useful Structure which is in an Humane Body in particular ; and more particularly yet, of the Admirable Frame, Nature, Faculties and Operations of Humane Soul or Mind : And any Reasonable Man may think, that what has been said, might be enough to satisfy an Unbeliever.

C H A P. IV.

II. **A**CCORDING to the Method proposed in the Beginning of this Discourse, I am now to proceed from the Rational to the Prudential Part, to shew that the Belief of a God is, not only the most Rational, but moreover the Best, the most Useful, and the Wisest Principle, which I hope will prove a full Answer to those who endeavour, not only to Dispute away this Belief as an Unreasonable Conceit, but even to Banter and Laugh People out of it, as a very Unwise Imagination. And in discoursing upon this Point, it will be necessary, for our clearer and more methodical Proceeding,

I. First, to shew for what Reason these Pretenders to Wisdom count the Belief of a Deity to be an Unwise Perswasion.

II. Then how utterly Ineffectual their Method is, in order to that Reason. And,

III. That due Notions of God, and the Sincere Practice of Religion, is the only Prudent and Wise Method.

I. Now

1. Now as to the first of these Heads ; the chief Reason why they rest on the Belief of a God to be an Unwise Perswasion, seems to be this : Because they conceive it to deprive themselves, and all others, of the Ease of their Minds, and all Comfort of their Lives, especially if they pursue their Pleasures according to the Conduct of Nature. For, God being supposed to be an Almighty and Arbitrary Agent, that is under no Power to Controul him, nor under any Law to Govern his Actions, but his own Absolute and Irresistible Will ; they cannot (as they think) promise themselves an Hour's Security from Him, in any of their present Enjoyments ; but still are apt to be disquieted with Fears, lest some Fatal Judgment should break out of the Clouds upon them, some Plague overtake them, some Trouble or other befall them, to spoil the Solaces of Life, and to imbitter all their Comforts. Besides ; the Belief of the Soul's Immortality being joined with the Belief of the Existence of God, as long as this Perswasion prevails, they know not what will become of them after Death, but are ready to suspect or fear the Worst: And there-

fore to rid their Minds of all Anxieties, they think it their best Course to rid themselves of all Notions of a God; to shut him quite out of their Thoughts; and to seek for all possible Arguments to Dispute and Banish this Frightful Being out of the World. And, as far as I can find, this was the Great Reason for which *Democritus* of old disseminated his Principles of Atheism: He found in himself and others such Terrible Apprehensions of what might befall them the next Hour, and especially after Death, that he thought it a proper Time for him to vend his Principles; and that he should do himself and all People a great Kindness, to make them think, that there was no Understanding, Inspecting, Governing Being over all; nor any Thing besides Matter and Motion; and that this was altogether by Chance, and without any Direction from a supposed Deity. This he thought People would be the more easily perswaded to think, because their Minds at that time were disposed and filled by their Fears to receive Impressions of this nature. For *Aristippus* had so debauched People with all sorts of Vice, and the *Stoicks* so preached up
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Fatality, that the Doctrines of Absolute Predestination, and Evil Consciences, meeting together, did so Torment the Minds of People, that they might think it their *Interest* and *Prudence* to fancy, that the Doctrines of a Deity, which the former Philosophers had taught, were nothing but Delusion. *Democritus* was followed by the cried-up *Epicurus*; a Man of Pleasures, and a Friend to no Pleasures of the Mind, but what arose from the Pleasures of the Body. The Sense of his own Guilt, and of the Guilt of other Vicious Wretches, made *him* also propagate the same Principles of Atheism. For it was rightly observed by *Cicero*, That though he owned a God in Words, to avoid Odium, and for fear of the Laws, (under which *Protagoras* had smarted) yet in *Fact* he denied the Existence of an Intelligent Being, the Author of Nature; and all his Principles touching the sole Existence of Atoms, and their Fortuitous Motions from all Eternity, did directly and manifestly lead on the Disbelief of a Superintending and Wise Deity. Nor was his Design throughout his New Philosophy any other, than to clear his own and other People's Minds of

those Solicitudes and Anxieties which they laboured under, from the Fearful Apprehensions they had of an Observing God, armed with an Irresistible Power. Therefore, that other Atheist, his Disciple, *Lucretius*, extolled him, the *Grains Homo*, as the Great Hero of his Age, that had the Confidence and Courage to dare God with all his Lightnings and Thunderbolts about him; to look him in the Face, and to deliver People from the Fear of him, and from the grievous Yoke of Religion under him.

The same old Atheistical Notions of desperate Heathens, have been Revived among Us of this Nation, by other Pretenders to Wit and Policy; who taking Advantage by those Impieties and Debaucheries which had been so Scandalously committed in times of Rebellion, and the great Immoralities acted ever since, thought the Minds of *our* People as capable as ever any others had been, of receiving Atheistical Impressions; and so, to rid them of all Fears of Punishment here, endeavour'd to poison them with many Corrupt Principles; which I shall reduce to Five Heads, that I may open that dark
Mystery

Mystery of Iniquity, wherein some vain Men seem to have lost their Wits.

Of those Principles, some relate,

1. To the whole Universe in General.
 2. Some, to those Beings in Particular, which we call Ghosts, Spirits, or Substances Incorporeal.
 3. Some to Religion.
 4. Some to a Future State.
 5. Others to the Ever-blessed God.
- By all which it will appear, what evil Methods conceited Men have used, to cure People's Anxieties; and then, where the Prudence and Wisdom lieth, whether in Infidelity, or True Religion.

1. The Corrupt Principles which relate to the whole Universe in General, are these: That the whole Universe is Corporeal, that is to say, Body; and hath the Dimensions of Magnitude, namely, Length, Breadth, and Depth; and consequently, that every Part of the Universe is Body, and what is not Body, is no part of the Universe, and therefore is Nothing, and consequently is no where: That, Substance Incorporeal implies a Contradiction, and are Words, which, when they are joined together, destroy one another, as if a Man should say, an Incorporeal Body: That Speeches of Things, not incident

*Levian-
than,
Pag. 371.*

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to

Leviash.
Pag. 19.

to Sense, are Absurd Speeches, taken upon Credit, without any Signification at all; because whatsoever we conceive, has been perceived first by Sense, either all alone, or by Parts; and therefore, a Man can have no Thought, representing any thing not subject to Sense: And that Words, whereby we perceive nothing but the Sound, are those we call Absurd, Insignificant, and Nonsense, as Immaterial Substance, Free-Will, &c.

Now the Meaning of these Principles, is; That, though the Holy Scripture speaks of divers Beings which fall not under our Senses, yet because we are not sensible of any thing but what doth act upon the Organs of the Body, therefore all Notions and Affirmations of Things, which we do not See, Hear, Feel, Smell, or Taste, are Absurd, Insignificant, and Nonsense.

2. The Corrupt Principles relating to those Beings, which we call Ghosts or Spirits, or Immaterial Substances, (as the Souls of Men, Devils, Angels, and God himself, whom the Scripture expressly calls a Spirit, and indeed is the chief of Spirits) as to all this, we are told by those wonderful, knowing Infidels,

dels, (who have ransack'd this World,
and the other also,) that 'tis a gene-
ral Error, That a Man's Soul is a Sub-
stance distinct from his Body; That a *Leviath.*
Spirit (if it doth not signifie an Invisi-
ble Body) is a Ghost, or Idol, or Phan-
tasm of the Imagination; That the *Pag. 340.*
Word *Ghosts* (which is used as the
same thing with *Spirits*) signifieth no-
thing, neither in Heaven nor Earth,
but the Imaginary Inhabitants of Man's
Brain; That there are no Incorporeal
Angels or Spirits, Good or Evil; And,
That the Significant Names, *Devil, Sa-*
tan, Abaddon, set not forth any Indi-
vidual Person, but only an Office or
Quality. Now the Meaning of these
Principles is this: That though the Ho-
ly Scripture tells us, That *God is a Spi-*
rit; and that *a Spirit hath not Flesh and*
Bones; and that *the Holy Ghost worketh*
in us: And although it speaks of a
Man's Soul, as a distinct Being from
his Body, and that which cannot be
Destroyed by them that can Kill the
Body; and of Angels, Good and Evil,
which are Vigorous, Active, and Power-
ful Beings; yet that the Belief of all
this, is only Phancy, and the Imagi-
nation of the Brain: So that, if a Man
can

can but save his Head from the Rencontres, and Repercussions, and chance Conflicts of Atoms, (as People save themselves under a Penthouse from a Storm of Hail) they need not be concerned for such Trifles as their Souls, nor stand in fear of Angels, or Devils, or any other Ghost, or Power Invisible.

Leviath.

Pag. 58.

3. The Corrupt Principles relating to Religion, are these: That the first Seeds and Principles of Religion, are only an *Opinion* of a Deity, and Powers Invisible: That Religion it self is a Fear of a Power Invisible, *Feigned* by the Mind, or Imagined from *Tales*, *allow'd* (by the Civil Power:) That 'tis the Ignorance of Natural Causes which produceth this Fear, and inclines People to Suppose, and Feign unto themselves, several Kinds of Powers Invisible; and to stand in Awe of their own Imaginations, and in time of Distress to Invoke them; as also, in time of good Success to give them Thanks, making the Creatures, of their own
51. *Phancy*, their Gods: That hence it comes, that People are in Anxiety, in a perpetual Solicitude of the Time to come: So that every Man, especially those that are

are Over-provident, are in an Estate like that of *Prometheus*, of whom it was feigned, That he was bound to the Hill *Caucasus*, a Place of large Prospect, where an Eagle, feeding on his Liver, Devoured by Day as much as was Repaired in the Night; so, *that* Man, which looks too Far before him, in the Care of Future Time, hath his Heart all the Day long gnawed on by the Fear of Death, Poverty, or other Calamity; and has no Repose or Pause of his Anxiety, but in Sleep: And lastly, That if this Superstitious Fear of Spirits were taken away, and many other Things depending thereon, by which, Crafty, Ambitious Persons Abuse the Simple People; Men would be much more fitted than they are for Civil Obedience. Now the open and plain Meaning of these Principles, is this; That though the Holy Scripture tells us, that *the Fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom*, and that *Godliness (or Religion) is Profitable unto All Things*; yet that the Notion of a Deity is only an Opinion, and that the Fear of a Deity is only the Passion that Ignorant and Fantastical People, who suppose and feign unto themselves a Deity, and
other

Leviath.

Pag. 7.

8.

other kinds of Powers Invisible, conceit ; a Fiction of their own Brains, which makes them look too far (as far as to the Grave, and beyond the Grave, to Eternity) and for that Reason are possessed with many Anxieties, and offer up their Prayers and Thanksgivings unto God, to be ridd of them, that they may not resemble *Prometheus* ; that it would be better for the World, if this Tormenting thing, called Religion, were taken away ; and be better for a Commonwealth (the only Terrible *Leviathan*) if the Teachers of Religion, and their Terrible Doctrines were quite laid aside, that Simple Folk might be no longer Abused with such Phantastical and Foolish Notions.

4. Other Corrupt Principles are concerning a Future State, and they are These ; that Soul and Life signifie the same thing ; and that the Body and Soul jointly, signifie the Body Alive ; that the Soul of Man hath no Existence separated from the Body, no more than the Soul of any other Living Creature : That what is said concerning Hell Torments, is Spoken Metaphorically, for Grief, and Discontent of Mind, which is to be for a Time only, and (if at all)

After

Lev'ath.

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345, 346.

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After the Resurrection: That the Doctrine of Eternal Torments is a Dark Doctrine; that there is no Eternal Life in Torments, nor shall every Wicked *Person*, or any one be Tormented Eternally: That it is impossible a Commonwealth should stand, where any other then the Sovereign hath a Power of giving Greater Rewards than Life (such as Life Eternal) or of inflicting Greater Punishments than Death (such as Eternal Torments :) That Men should not suffer themselves to be Abused by those, who by the Doctrine of separated Essences, built on the Vain Philosophy of *Aristotle*, would fright them from obeying the Laws of their Country, with empty Names, as Men fright Birds from the Corn with an empty Doublet, or Hat, and a crooked Stiek: And that the Fear of Darkness and Ghosts (or Spirits) is a Disease, not unlikely to be compared to the Epilepsie, or Falling Sicknes (which the *Jews* took to be one kind of Possession by Spirits) in the Body Natural; for, as in this Disease there is an unnatural Spirit, or Wind in the Head, that obstructeth the Roots of the Nerves, and causeth Convulsions; so in the Body

Leviath. Pag. 172.
Po-

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Politick, when the Spiritual Power moveth the Members of a Commonwealth by the Terrour of Punishments, and Hope of Rewards, otherwise than by the Civil Power they ought to be moved, and by strange and Hard Words suffocate their Understanding, it must needs thereby Distract the People. Now the true meaning of these Principles is this; that when a Man Dyeth, his Soul Perisheth, and is Annihilated, and consequently is not capable of Torments in a State of separation from the Body; that the Soul is not to be Recovered but by a Resurrection to a Second Life; that then, a Wicked Man's Torment will be Grief of Mind for some time; that the worst he can expect at the End of his Second Life, is to be cast Alive into some Flames, as into a Bonfire, to be soon consumed; and that they who Teach Doctrines of Higher things, as of an Immortal Soul, of an Avenging Deity, of Hell and Divels, and Unquenchable Fire, and the like, as they are commonly Taught out of the Holy Scriptures; they do but set up so many Scare-crows, to Abuse People, and to Frighten them from their Pleasures; and take a ready
Course

Course to Distemper their Brains, and to throw them into Epileptical Fits, and Distraction.

5. The Corrupt Principles relating to the ever-blessed God, are these; That, we cannot have any Conception, or Thought of any thing that is not incident to our outward Senses; That there is no Evidence of the Existence of any thing but from Sense; That Words whereby we conceive nothing but the Sound, are Absurd, Insignificant, and Nonsense; That whatsoever we imagine, is Finite; That there is no Conception of any thing, we call Infinite, as Infinite Time, Infinite Force, or Infinite Power; That the Greatness and Power of a God are Unconceivable, because whatsoever is Conceivable, must be conceived by Sense, and conceived to be in some Place, and to be indued with some Magnitude, and to be divisible into Parts; That the Name of God is Used, not to make us conceive him (for he is Incomprehensible) but that we may Honour him; That because Words (and consequently the Attributes of God) have their Signification by Agreement and Constitution of Men, those Attributes are to be held signi-

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ficative of Honour, that *Men intend*
 shall be so; That those Attributes
 which the Sovereign Power ordaineth,
 in the Worship of God, for *Signs* of
 Honour, ought to be taken and used
 for such by Private Men, in their
 Publick Worship; That in the Attri-
 butes which we give to God, we are
 not to consider the Signification of
 Philosophick *Truth*, but the Signification
 of Pious *Intentions*, to do him the
 greatest Honour that we are Able: That
 our Faith consisteth not in our *Opinion*,
 but in our *Submission* (to the Pleasure
 of the Civil Power,) because the Na-
 ture of God is Incomprehensible; that
 is to say, we understand nothing of
 what he is, and therefore the Attributes
 we give him, are not to tell one ano-
 ther what he is, nor to signifie our
Opinion of his *Nature*, but our Desire
 to Honour him with such Names, as we
 conceive most Honourable among our
 Selves: Again, that in God we consider
 not what Attribute expresseth best his
 Nature, which is Incomprehensible;
 but what best expresseth our desire to
 Honour him: *Lastly*; That they that
 Adventure to Reason of Gods Nature,
 from these Attributes of Honour,
 losing

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losing their Understanding in the very first Attempt, fall from one Inconvenience into another, without End, and without Number, in the same manner, as when a Man ignorant of the Ceremonies of a Court, coming into the presence of a Greater Person than he is used to speak to, and stumbling at his Entrance, to save himself from falling, lets slip his Cloak, to recover his Cloak, lets fall his Hat, and with one Disorder after another, discovers his Astonishment and Rusticity. Now the meaning of these Principles, is this ; That though the Holy Scriptures tell us the most Glorious things of the Nature and Attributes of God ; That he is Infinitely Wise, Just, Powerful and Good ; yet because he is supposed to be an Incorporeal Being, not Subject to our Corporeal Sense, so as to be felt or seen by us, therefore we can have no Notion or Conception of such a Being ; but that this supposed Deity is (at least to us) an Unconceivable Nothing, because the Words which are set to express his Imaginary Perfections, carry nothing of Real and Strict Truth with them, but a Sound only, and therefore are Absurd, In-

Leviath.
Pag. 374.

significant, and Nonsense. Nevertheless, in Complaisance to the Mode of the Times, and to the Humour of People, and to the Laws of the Civil Magistrate, we must *Profess* the Existence of such a Being, and give him all possible Attributes of *Honour*, and speak Highly of him, as other Folk do; but for Men to Argue hence, that there is *Really* and in *Truth* such a Sublime and Glorious Being; this, they think, is to do like Fools, who understand not Philosophy; and to run themselves endlessly out of one Absurdity into a great many more, like Clowns that are Unacquainted with Compliments and Courtship.

These are some of the Corrupt Principles, which prevail with too many, even in this Age; and which I have faithfully collected out of a Celebrated Book, Composed by a late Designing Wretch in this Nation, who borrowed them of a few old Atheists among the Heathens, and for some private Ends of his own was pleased to Publish them to the World, as a very Wise System of Philosophy, to Dispossess Peoples Minds of all Notions of a Provident and Righteous God; and so Deliver them

them from those Fears, Sollicitudes and Anxieties, which otherwise they must lye under from the Apprehension of an All-powerfull and Just Deity; especially if they go on in an Evil Course of Life.

The very Exposing of these Principles, is, methinks, enough to Confute them. They are of such an horrid Nature, that instead of Confuting, we should rather begall good Christians Pardon for galling their Ears and Minds, by the bare making mention of them.

However, because these Principles are for digging up the very Foundations of Religion, I must take one step further, to Disputethe Case, and shew,

I. That 'tis impossible for Men of these Corrupt Principles to Cure the Fears and Anxieties of their own Minds by them.

II. That 'tis as impossible for them to Cure other Mens.

III. That due Notions of God and the Sincere Practice of Religion is the only Effectual way to do it; and therefore is the Best and Wisest Method.

I. That Men of these Corrupt Principles cannot possibly cure the Fears and Anxieties of their *own* Minds by them. For let them pretend what they will, and speak as big as they please, they are as Fearful and Distrustful Men, as any in the World, notwithstanding all their Bold and Swagging Principles. To this purpose there are three things to be considered :

*Cic. de
Nat. Deor.
l. 2.*

I. *First*, That Great Man *Cicero*, tells us, as an Observation in His Time, that no People were so excessively Fearful of Death and the Gods, as those very Men themselves, who would have perswaded others not to Fear them at all. This Observation is Common to this Day, as concerning the followers of that old Athiest, *Epicurus* : For the very Nature of their *Principles* doth Directly introduce this Fear, though they suppose no such Being, as a Deity, in the World. For since they believe nothing besides, or above, improvident Matter and Senseless Atoms, Accidentally, and Blindly moving one another, without the Superintendency of a Divine Hand, they must Naturally be possess'd with Fears, lest, by the various Encounters
and

and Repercussions of those violent things, they themselves (though their great Adorers) may be Hurt, or Destroyed, by Accident, the very next Hour. They who believe not the Existence of a Provident God, cannot but be afraid of Blind Chance. How can they be secure in their own Minds, but (what *Epicurus* himself Dreadfully apprehended) that the Frame of Nature, which they suppose fell together by Chance, may by another Chance suddenly fall a-pieces on their Heads? Or, tho' their Fears do not go so far, yet if the Contingencies in the World do happen meerly by the various and unusual Rencounters of Undiscerning Atoms; by their violent Occursions and Stroaks; by their unavoidable Collisions, Pranks, and Dashings one against another; how can they promise themselves more Safety amidst so many Imminent Dangers, than in a Battel amidst a Storm of Hail-shot? A Flash of Lightning, a Clap of Thunder, a Boysterous Tempest, a shaking House, a Terrible Rumour, an Approaching Enemy; nay, a Dark, Doleful Night, and a Dangerous Road, cannot but Frighten those, who have not a Good

God to Believe and Trust in: But above all, a violent Disease, and the Prospect of Death (especially if it be attended with a Guilty Conscience (a bitter Remembrance of Adulteries, Murders, Perjuries, and a Dissolute Life) this must naturally strike them with Panick Fears, and Dismal Horrors; because the least they can expect after all, is, to be for ever Deprived of all that was Valuable, sweet and Dear to them, their Darling Pleasures, their Idol Interest, and their very Being, for the Preservation whereof many Base Arts have been used, and Villanies Acted. This single Consideration shews, that the Fears of such Men must needs be Incurable.

22. But, *Secondly*, There is another Consideration which shews it also; and 'tis taken from the False Notions these Men entertain of an Imaginary State of Humane Nature: Which Notions can owe their Original to nothing but Vitiating Minds, and the most Timorous Spirits. They conceive, that by Nature we are Mortal Enemies to one another; that every Man hath a Right to every thing that suits with his Desires or Advantage; that pursuant
to

to this Right, he may Lawfully do whatsoever he Pleaseth or can do; that Self, ones own Dear Self is his only Law and Rule; that undecently to Humane Institution there is nothing Unjust or Dishonest; that till the Laws of Civil Society forbid him, he may Plunder and Ravage, as in a State of Hostility; that he may offer Violence to any Man; that he may cut the Throat of the next Man he meets with; and that he may kill his nearest Relatives, even his Father and Mother, if it be for his Profit, or Pleasure; to be sure, if he judgeth it for the Safety of himself, his own Dear self, lest he himself should be so served. This I call it an Imaginary State, because no part of Mankind was ever in such a Condition of Liberty since the World stood; and 'tis as False a Notion of Humane Nature, as ever was, or could be devised. Not to enter into a Philosophical dispute about it; do but make your own Observations of little Children, among whom you may easily see the True State of Humane Nature, before it comes to be Corrupted with Vice and Villany. Pretty Wretches! That are not tainted with any sort of
Actual

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Actual Guilt of their own contracting; that know not the Difference between Good and Evil; that have not the least Notion of Humane Society; nor what Justice or Injustice, Friendship or Enmity means. And I instance in these poor harmless Creatures, because our Blessed Savior himself hath sent us all to them, as Examples of Innocence. O Blessed God! who hast given us such Charming Patterns out of our own Bowels, to shew us what we should be! How Pleased are they when they meet together, though Strangers to one another, nor ever saw one another before? With what Delights do they, in their way, Caress one another? What Kindness and Love do they shew one another? How do they Embrace, Stroak, and Kiss one another? What Affection and Tenderneſs do they expreſs to one another? And how Communicative are they of their Rattles and Play-things, to Divert and Entertain one another; things as Pleasing and Valuable to them, as an Estate is to a Lord of a Manor? And shall any *Malmesbury Leviathan* perſwade us, after this, that the State of Humane Nature is a State of War? No, 'tis Kindneſs and Goodneſs;
'tis

'tis Benevolence and Love; 'tis Affection and Charity that is in our Innocent Nature, what ever Arts a Designing Society, or an Atheistick Philosopher may Deal in. Those Unnatural Notions, which he stole from some old Heathen Philosophers, and which his Unwary followers have imbibed, and which they all conclude were the Occasion of Mens falling into Civil Societies in their own Defence; they have proceeded from a Principle of a Vicious Timorousness of Mind, an Abject Beluine Fear: The very Nature of those Notions shews it manifestly; and it plainly argues, that what they mistakenly say, was the Seed of Religion, is Really the Foundation of all their Politicks; *viz.* Fear; a Base, Pernicious and Savage Fear.

3. Well; These Desperate Fears in a supposed State of Nature, do these pretending Philosophers Cure them by being Members of a Civil Society? No; but instead of Curing, they make their Fears encrease and break out worse and worse into all Impiety, and the greatest and most Destructive Immoralities; for according to their Principles, when once a Commonwealth is
set

set up, the Members thereof are Bound, for Fear of the Civil Laws, and to Avoid Danger, to Pretend, Say, or Act any thing, though it be contrary to the perswasion in their Hearts, and against their own private Consciences. So that if the Commonwealth should require them to Profess themselves *Papists* or *Mahometans*, or *Jews* or *Pagans*, they are obliged to do it, for Fear of the worst, though they be convinced in their own Minds, that all these Professions are False, and though their Consciences tell them, they Dissemble and Lye, when they Obey. To prove this, let us put some Cases, which the Ring-leader of our Modern Atheists, a very Conscientious Casuist and Polititian, hath positively Resolved. Suppose a Commonwealth should forbid People to profess Christ's Doctrines? He tells us, that it is not Lawful for any Subject to teach any Doctrine, which the Governor forbiddeth to be taught. Suppose a Commonwealth should demand of Men an Implicite Faith, as the *Papists* do? He tells us, that they are to Captivate their Understanding and Reason, and forbear Contradiction, and speak so, as by Law-

*Livianth.**Pag. 250.*

Lawful Authority they are commanded, and Live accordingly ; which, in Sum, is Trust and Faith reposed in him that speaketh, though the Mind be incapable of any Notion at all from the Words spoken.

For, saith He, it is with the Mysteries of Religion, as it is with wholsom Pills for the Sick, which, swallowed whole, have the Virtue to Cure ; but if chewed, are for the most part cast up again without effect. Suppose a Commonwealth should command People to Profess a Religion which they know is False ? He tells us, that in every Commonwealth, they who have no Supernatural Revelation to the contrary, ought to obey the Laws of their own Sovereign, in the External Acts and Profession of Religion. As for the Inward Thoughts and Belief of Men, which Humane Governours can take no notice of, they are not voluntary, and consequently fall not under Obligation. Suppose a Commonwealth should require Men to acknowledge the Doctrine of Transubstantiation ? He tells us, that if a Man pretend, that after certain Words Spoken over a Piece of Bread, presently God hath made it, not Bread, but a God, or a Man,

Leviath.
Pag. 195.
196.

Liviatb.
Pag. 237.

Man, or Both, and nevertheless it looketh still as like Bread, as ever it did; there is no Reason for any Man to think the Miracle really done, nor consequently to Fear him (who pretends to have done it) till he enquire of God by his Vicar, or Lieutenant, whether it be done or not. If he say, 'tis done, then he is not to Contradict it. Suppose a Commonwealth should require us to say, that the Report of Former Miracles (done by the Prophets, and Christ) is a Lye? He tells us, that in such a Case we are not every one to make our own private Reason, or Conscience, but the Publick Reason, that is, the Reason of Gods Supreme Lieutenant, Judge. A Private Man has always the Liberty (because Thought is Free) to believe, or not believe in his Heart those Acts that have been given out for Miracles, according as he shall see what Benefit can arrive by Mens Belief to those that pretend or Countenance them. But when it comes to Confession of the Faith, a Private Man must submit to the Publick, that is to say, to Gods Lieutenant. Suppose a Commonwealth should, for the Avoiding of Persecution, forbid us to believe in

in Christ, and Command us, to say with our Tongues, we believe not? 'Tis a Case he puts himself; and to this he Answers, That Profession with the Tongue is but an External Thing, and no more than any other Gesture, whereby we signifie our Obedience, and wherein a Christian, who holds firmly in his Heart the Faith of Christ, hath the same Liberty which the Prophet *Elisha* allowed to *Naaman* the Syrian. *Naaman* was converted in his Heart to the God of *Israel*; yet by bowing before the Idol *Rimmon*, he denied the True God in effect, as much as if he had done it with his Lips. And hence he argues (not rightly understanding that Place of Scripture) that Faith being Internal and Invisible, all Men have the License that *Naaman* had, and need not put themselves into Danger for their Faith, under a Civil Sovereign that is an Infidel. If you ask, what you shall answer to our Saviors saying, *Whosoever denieth me before Men, I will deny him before my Father which is in Heaven?* To this he says, that whatsoever a Subject, as *Naaman* was, is compelled to do in Obedience to his Sovereign, and doth it not in order to his

*Leviath.
Pag. 271.*

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271.

Leviath.
Pag. 168.

his own Mind, but in order to the Laws of his Country, that Action is not his, but his Sovereigns; nor is it he that in this Case denies Christ before Men, but his Governour, and the Law of his Country. Lastly, suppose a Man says (as every Honest Man will be ready to say) that such Practices are, not only Evil in their own Nature, but against his Conscience too, and therefore the more Sinful? As to this, he confidently tells us, that these two Principles, First *That every Private Man is Judge of Good and Evil Actions,* 169. and then, *That what a Man does against his Conscience, is Sin,* are Doctrines Repugnant to Civil Society; Doctrines that are False and Seditious; nay, the Poyson, and Diseases of a Commonwealth; because the Civil Law is the Measure of Good and Evil Actions; and that though he that is Subject to no Civil Law, Sinneth in all he does against his Conscience, because he has no other Rule to follow but his own Reason; yet it is not so with him that Lives in a Commonwealth, because the Law is the Publick Conscience.

Now

Now the clear meaning of these Principles, is this ; That for Fear of Punishment, and to avoid the Danger of that most Terrible thing, called Death, a Member of a Commonwealth may, if Required, by any outward Act, give over the Profession of Christianity ; and own himself an Heathen, and what not ? That, for Fear of Punishment, he may Renounce his Reason, and acknowledge any Doctrines, though never so Dark, Ridiculous, and Senseless : That he may pretend to be a *Jew*, or a *Mahometan*, for Fear of Punishment, and out of Complisance to the Laws, though it be against his own Conscience : That he may profess himself a *Papist*, and subscribe to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, for Fear of Punishment, if the Civil Magistrate tells him, that the little Wafer is not Bread, but Flesh and Blood and Bones, a Man, and a God too : That for Fear of Punishment he may say, that all the Scripture-Miracles were Forgeries and Tricks, and what is Reported of them is a Lye : That, for Fear of Punishment, a Man may deny Christ, and profess that either there was no such Person, or that he was

an Impostor: That, for Fear of Punishment, one may do any Idolatrous Act, as long as his Heart does not Consent to it: That the Denying of Jesus Christ is to be charged upon the Magistrate and the Laws, as the only Criminals, that Frightned him into Apostacy: That, though Preachers of Religion call these things Villanies; yet, that these things are Necessary for Fear of Punishment; nay, Blameless, Innocent things, though done against ones own Private Conscience; nay, Praiseworthy things, considering they are done in Obedience to the Civil Magistrate, who is the keeper of Publick Conscience; Only People must take Care, that their Hearts Recoyl at these outward Ceremonies; their Minds must not go along with their Hands, or Tongues, or Pens; Thoughts are free, and whether they know it to be True or False they Profess Right or Wrong they do; all is very well, if they do but keep their inward Sentiments close, and reserved to themselves.

Now, there are Two things which I beseech you to consider seriously from these Premised, and Notorious (would to God they were not Practis'd) Principles.

I. First,

1. First, what a Natural Tendency these Principles carry along with them. Do they not introduce all manner of Impiety? Do they not tend to give Licence to all the most shameful Immoralities in the World? Do they not Authorize Hypocrites, Falseness, Tricking, and the most Abominable Arts of Deceit and Jugling? Do they not directly serve to Destroy all Truth, and Faith, and Common Honesty amongst Mankind; to Defeat and Baffle the very Ends of all Civil Society, and consequently to Dissolve it? How can you Repose your Trust in People, whose Professions are Dissonant from their Meanings, and contrary unto them; and that, upon Principles? What Hold can you take of such, if there be no such thing as Conscience to Govern them? How can you Believe any outward Professions of Religion they make, if they are Taught themselves, to think one thing, and to say another? They may Speak somewhat Honourably of God and his Attributes, and at the same time believe nothing at all of an Invisible Being, or of his Perfections. They may call the Scriptures, Holy; and Argue from them, and Interpret

them to serve their own Turn; and at the same time make themselves Merry with them, in their own Minds, as a Jest or Romance. They may Quote the old Prophets, and at the same time believe them to have been no other than Madmen. They may call Jesus Christ, our Savior, and our Blessed Saviour, and at the same time Ridicule Him and his Religion in their Private Thoughts. They may Talk of the Holy Ghost, as Christians do, and at that time have not so much esteem of him, as they have of a good Wind, or an wholesome Puff of Air. In short; they may Profess themselves Christians and Protestants, and at the same time may be, in Principle, Turks, or Heathens, or (which is worse) Atheists: For none but themselves know their Hearts; and what they outwardly Profess may be only in Compliance with the Laws, to follow the Custom of the Place, and the Humour of the Times; to Speak the Common Language of Simple People for fear of the worst, and in Obedience to the Pleasure, or rather the Sword, of the Civil Magistrate; and all this while they may be through-principled Infidels and Atheists,

as we have great Reason to think, the Author of these Principles *de facto* was.

2. Next, I desire you to consider, what Ground such Men get of their own Fears, by Renouncing the belief of a Deity. Still they are in *Fear*, in Fear of an *Arbitrary Commonwealth*, instead of a Righteous Deity; so that at best it is but exchanging Fetters for Fetters, Anxieties for Anxieties; otherwise it cannot be conceived, how such Horrid Doctrines could be Publish'd and Received, or how such Horrid Practices could be made Current, were it not for *Fear* of suffering under the Civil Power. But the Truth is, that as Men of these Principles shake not off their Fears by their shaking off the Belief of God; so their Fears are the *worse* and more Tyrannical in their Nature, whereas the True Fear of God would Allay and supersede them; and they are Productive of Immoralities, which the True Fear of God would Prevent (as I shall shew hereafter:) so that for Men to throw off the Faith of a Deity, is the ready way to throw themselves under the greatest Solitudes and Anxieties in the World, and therefore is the most Ineffectual, Vain and Silly

Method to deliver themselves from them.

II. And if they cannot deliver their *own* Minds from Fear, by the help of all their Reason and Philosophy, how can it be expected they should Deliver the Minds of *other* People from them? For Mankind do not all Believe, and Act at the same Rate. Though some few Men Love to be singular in their Notions, yet the Minds of the Generality of Mankind are not to be easily ridd of the Notions of a God. The Divine Being hath left a Witness of himself, as in all other Parts of the World, so in our own Minds; though I will not now enter into that nice Dispute, Whether the Notion of a Deity be an *Innate*, or Natural Principle; In which Dispute there are some mistakes, which the opposers of Innate Principles seem to go upon. For no Body thinks (as they suppose) that there are in the Souls of Men, at the time of Birth, or Conception, a set Number of Propositions actually and perfectly *Formed* in the Soul, like so many plain Propositions written on Paper. But yet it seems reasonable to think, that, as in all the Seminal Cicatrices of Plants
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and Animals, there are *Rudiment Principles*, which are suitable to their several Natures, and which, by the help of Time, enable them to act according to their several Kinds; so there may be in the Souls of Men some *Rudiment Notices* of our Creator, which (though Inexpressible, yet) are suitable to the Nature of Humane Souls, and which by the Help of Time, and the Use of our Rational Faculties, are improved into the actual Knowledge of God. But let that rest as a Doubt; this is unquestionable, that our Souls are Naturally indued with *Powers* and *Faculties* of Perceiving the Difference between Good and Evil, between Truth and Falsehood; and are Naturally Prepossest with an *Aptitude* and *Inclination* in general, to consent to that which appears to be Good, and to Assent to that which appears to be True: And when we descend to Particulars, we find our selves disposed and swayed naturally to chuse this or that in Particular, as Good; and to Entertain this or that Notion in Particular, as True. Now, of those Notions, This Teaching the Existence of a Deity, is one; For when a Man that has the Use

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of his Reason comes to understand, what is meant by the Word, GOD, there is a Propensity and Aptness in him to believe, that there Really is such a Divine and most excellent Being; especially when he observes what Wonderful Marks there are of excellent Wisdom, Power, and Goodness in the Admirable Frame of the World. Hence Naturally proceeds the General Perswasion among all Mankind, that there is a God, who is the Great Author of Nature, and Governs the World, and will Punish those who do Evil: And from this Perswasion there ariseth a strong Fear in those who Work Wickedness; so that this Fear must naturally be Universal; nor do I think it can be totally Conquered, no not by those Men, who Corrupt their Natural Understandings with odd Principles, and do what they can to harden themselves in a State of Infidelity.

Now, Suppose such Men should pretend to do you that Service, as to clear your minds of this Fear, that you may Act and Live as you please without any danger of Punishment from Heaven; How is it Possible for them to do you this Kindness, if your Actions are still

still evil? Why, the only *Bold* stroke they can give towards it, is, To convince your Minds thoroughly, that though out of Complaisance to the Civil Magistrate, and the Laws, People talk of a Provident, Powerful and Just God, yet that this is nothing, but Language *A la Mode*; That there is nothing of Philosophick Truth in all this; That there is, for certain, nothing in the whole Universe, but Matter; That there is no Being that is not subject to Sense; no Invisible Spirit, no Infinite Power and the like; That these are Tales publickly Allowed; That the Name and Attributes of God signifie nothing of the Reality of such a Nature, but are only Expressions of Honour, which were Agreed upon by Civil Authority, and which drop from the Lips of Men of Astonisht Minds; and consequently, that there is no Danger of Divine Vengeance, no Immortal State hereafter, no separated Essences after Death, no such Place as Hell, no such Ghosts or Spirits as Divels to Torment you, no such Torments as unquenchable Fire, or the like; but that all these Foolish Notions are Artificial Scare-crows, Invented and Contrived by designing

signing Cheats, to bring People to a Manageable Temper; like Fictitious Priapuses, an Empty Doublet and Hat, and a Crooked Stick, to Fright Birds from Corn; and therefore that it is a most unwise thing for Men to be Frightned by them from their Humours, Lusts and Pleasures.

Now to Dispossess you of all your Fears, and to make their own Assertions good, these Men must undenyably prove the certainty of what they say; for, if the things, they affirm, are uncertain, there is then room for Doubts, and consequently for Fears. How is it possible for them to pretend to Certainty? because what they say runs upon Negatives; as this is Not, and that is Not; and it is Impossible for them (especially in this Case) to prove Negatives; unless they will pretend to have been every where, within and without this World, and to have Ransackt Earth, and Seas, and Air, and Heaven it self, to discover what is there, and what is not; And yet even such a Search could not do it neither; because even among the various Species of things in this World, we can only Discover the outward Skin and Surface,
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nor do we for certain know, what is, or is Not *within* them; 'tis all Conjecture, and Opinion, which we gather, as well as we can, from their Effects, and the Operations of their hidden Nature; and then, how can any Men prove for certain, what is not in the other World? or assure you, that there is no God, no Immortal Spirits; no Hell; no Torments for Workers of Iniquity? Suppose then they tell you that though they are not certain of the Non Existence of these things upon their own knowledge, yet their Reason tells them, it is very probable, there are no such things; this cannot take away ill Peoples Fears neither: For, when we say a Matter is only probable, or likely, we leave room to guess, that the contrary is probable and likely too; otherwise it would be certain: And if a thing may not be only, it may be perhaps, for ought we know to the contrary; So that, supposing no Divine Revelation in this Case, one Probability on this side lies fairly against a Probability on that: And what good can Conjecture do? If Reason tells them, 'tis likely there is no God; Reason tells others (though there were no Voice or
Revela-

Revelation from Heaven) that 'tis a Thousand times more likely, there is a Deity; and can this rid you of your Fears, or in the least Measure abate them? No, the Natures of Real Beings are so utterly Stiff and Refractory, that they are never to be destroyed, or altered by Peoples Opinions, Conjectures, or Wishes. If there be a God (for we are now Arguing from Conjecture, if there be a God) it is not the Opinion of an Atheist can Annihilate his Being. If there be an Hell, it is not Mens Fantastical Conceits, that can blow out the Fire. And if there be Immaterial Spirits, as Angels, and Divels, and the Souls of Men, 'tis not their Perswasions that can make them *not* be. And what Remedy can this prove to Cure, or Allay the Fears of Wicked People; especially when they are likely to Die? In Cases of great Danger, Wise Men are wont to suppose the worst, and to provide against the worst that may happen. And because the Danger of Death is the greatest can befall us in this World, yet that which introduceth a Danger that is Infinitely greater in the next; Ill Men that are not as stupid as Stocks and Stones will then be made to consider

consider what will become of them, if after all they find a Just God whom they have denied, an Hell which they think of, the Pains in their own Consciences which they totally slighted, and other Intolerable and Eternal Torments which they laught at as Scarecrows.

I have been the longer upon this Point, because it was necessary to shew fully, that though (as *Plutarch* rightly observes in his Book of Superstition) *Atheism* was designed to Destroy the Terrours of a God; yet neither *Democritus*, nor *Epicurus*, nor his Herd to this day, have been able, with all their Dablings in Philosophy, to shake off thereby, from themselves or other People, those Tormenting Fears, which make the Minds of evil Workers Melancholy and Restless; and so, that to disbelieve the Existence of a Superintending God, is in order thereunto, a very Ineffectual and Foolish Method.

C H A P. V.

THere is another, and a far better way to do it, if Men would be Wise indeed; namely to remove those Causes, which give Birth to these Excessive and Disquieting Fears; which Causes are two chiefly.

1. The one, an Evil Conscience: For all Vice and Impiety is so naturally attended with an inward Sense of its own Heinousness, that the sad Reflections upon an Evil Life must necessarily produce a Dread of Punishment. Here then the True Course to be taken, that you may be free from all Anxious, Desponding, and Cruciating Fears, is to apply your Minds seriously to the Practice of Virtue and Religion, and to Live Godly, Righteously, and Soberly in this present World.

2. The other Cause of those Afflicting Fears, is an undue, unworthy and Evil Notion, which some People entertain of the Ever-blessed God. For some very Ill-natur'd Men, thinking to Hollow their own Base
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Temper, by making it to Resemble the Nature of God, have misrepresented the Deity (though the most Amiable Being in the whole Universe) under such False Notions, as would make God a most Frightful and Odious Object of Mens thoughts, were those Notions True. They have Wickedly described him, as one like unto themselves; as a Being, that is wholly Arbitrary and Tyrannical, acting only according to his own Will and Irresistible Power; as a Being, that made Mankind to Display his uncontrollable Power upon them; as a Being, that takes Delight in making his Creatures miserable; as a Being, that is Spiteful and Malicious, Mischievous and Sanguinary, Furious and Implacable, Formidable and Hurtful; and all this, because he can and will be so: In short, they have rendred him as an Hating, and an Hateful Being; and therefore it is no Wonder, if People that were taught to take hold of these Terrifying, Dreadful Notions, were ready to fall into Agonies at the Thoughts of such a Deity. Hence arriseth that
Fear,

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Fear, which in an ill Sense, because grounded upon ill Notions, is called *Secundum viam*, which is vulgarly rendered, Superstition; meaning a Cowardly Servile Passion that makes ones Spirits sink; an Astonishment of Mind; a Dismal Apprehension of God, as a Fury, a Bloody-minded, and Cruel Being; such a Fear (yet Greater) as Vassals have of a Savage Tyrant; such a Fear as an Absolute Slave hath of a Barbarous Master; such a Fear as a Poor Man hath of a Malicious and Impetuous Magistrate; such a Fear as some Heathens had of evil Dæmons, when they Worshipt them that they might do them no mischief: And such a Fear as the Devils themselves have of God, who, Tremble, and Wish that He were not in Being. To this Purpose says *Plutarch*; *ἐκ τοῦ ὅτι ἂν ἄθεός, θεὸς ἦν, ὁ δὲ δεισιμὸν ἔβηεν*, that is, *The Atheist thinks there is no God, the Superstitious would not have one*, such a Terrible thing does the one Represent the Deity to be, that the other may Wish there were no God. Now as to this that you may be
free

free from all Excessive Fears, your great Care should be to possess your Souls with such Thoughts of God, as are suitable to the Nature of a Being, that is Eminently and Absolutely Perfect; and not Powerful only, but moreover Wise, Righteous, Kind and Good to all his Creatures; such a desirable Being, that if we could suppose did not Exist, it would be for the Interest, Security and Comfort of all Pious and Honest-hearted People to Wish, that such a Being there were. And for your Help I shall,

3. In the Third Place endeavour to do these Two things.

I. *First*, to lay before you, in short, the True Genuine Notions of God; not only as they are Revealed to us in the Holy Scripture, but as they were the Sentiments even of the old Philosophers (who judged of things according to Natural and Impartial Reason) before some Self-conceited and Profligate Men Sophisticated those Ancient Notions with the Introduction of Atheism.

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II. To

II. To shew, what an Effectual and True way, the Right Belief of God is, to Stifle those Excessive and Tormented Fears, which otherwise People must be in Anguish under.

I. Now to Men of Learning it is plain, that before Philosophy came to be Adulterate with Atheistical Doctrines, the Ancient Heathen Philosophers (and even those who held the Doctrine of Atoms) did agree in these Grand Truths, *viz.* That there is one Supream Mind (or Being) whom we call God: So that *Maximus Tyrius* tells us, that notwithstanding the various Opinions of Men (as to other things) there was a Concurrent Maxim and Opinion amongst all Mankind, whether Greeks or Barbarians, that there is a God who is the King and Father of all things. They believed likewise, that God made the World, and disposed it into that Beautiful Frame, and Useful Order, wherein it is, though they differed in their Opinions about the *Matter*, out of which God made it: They concluded from many Philosophical Observations, that the World is Governed by a Divine Providence, ordering every
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thing for the Best, and directing the Course of Affairs with respect to the good of the whole Universe: They believed, that God createth all things, and is in all things, and Filleth all things, that he perfectly Knoweth whatsoever is capable of being known; that he is perfectly Wise, doing every thing for great Ends, and Fitting the properest Means in order to those Ends: That he is Omnipotent and perfect in all things, by Virtue of the Fecundity of his Power to do whatsoever is possible of being done: That he is perfectly Just, governing his Actions by the Doctrines of his own Nature, and Rewarding or Punishing People according as they act either Well, or Ill: That he is also a Being perfectly Good, full of Pitty, Mercy, Benignity, Kindness, and Love: In short, that he is the Best, the most Excellent, and the most Amiable of all Beings; insomuch that *Plato*, and the *Pythagoreans*; and the *Stoicks*, held, that the Happiness of Men is, to Resemble God as much as they can. And upon these Principles the Sober Heathens were Taught, to have constant Recourse unto God; and in all their Straights and Necessities, to

address themselves to him with their several sorts of Solemn Devotion, and to Pray to him for his Assistance and Compassion in the short comprehensive Form, which was afterwards used in the Christian Church, *Κύριε ἐλέησον*, or *Lord have Mercy upon us*. Nay, it appears out of *Plato*, that in his time there was such a Religious Temper among the common *Pagans*, that whosoever had the least Seriousness or Sobriety in them, whensoever they took any Enterprize in hand, whether Great or Small, they did always Invoke God for Assistance and Direction. They believed also that God made the Souls of Mankind; that he ordained them to be Immortal; that they do not Die with the Body; that after Death God doth Judge them; and that, as they have acted in this Life, so they are Disposed of, some into a State of Misery, others into a State of Happiness; so that, according to the Philosopher *Empedocles*, If we Live Holily and Justly, we shall be happy here, and more happy after our Departure hence, having our Happiness not necessarily confined to Time, but being able to Rest and Fix in it to all Eternity,
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Feasting with the other Immortal Beings.

Now, if we will (according to the Stile of the Holy Scriptures) express the Sense of these great Notions, which the old *Pagan* Philosophers conceived of the Nature and Perfections of God, we may soon draw, both from Humane Reason, and from Divine Revelation, such a Description of God, as is enough to Deliver People of Upright Hearts and Lives, from those Excessive Fears, which Afflict and Torment the Minds of others. As thus; Doubtless there is a God, that in the beginning Created the Heaven and the Earth; He Spake the Word, and they were made; He commanded and they stood fast; He hath given all things a Law, which is not to be broken; upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power; worketh all things according to the Counsel of his Will; and is the Governour among the People, and over all the World: He Filleth Heaven and Earth; is a God of Knowledge; and by him actions are weighed: He searcheth the Heart and Reins; knoweth our Down-sitting and Up-rising; Understandeth our Thoughts long before
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they are conceived ; is about our Path, and about our Bed, and spieth out all our ways ; nor is there a Word in our Tongues, but he knoweth it altogether : He doeth whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and in Earth ; and with him all things are possible : He is the only Wise Being ; in Wisdom hath he made all things ; nor is there any that can direct his Spirit, or be his Counsellor to Teach him : He is Righteous in all his ways, and Holy in all his Works ; in every Nation, he that feareth him, or worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him : He Loveth Righteousness, and hateth Iniquity : He careth for the Righteous, nor will he suffer the Righteous to be forsaken : He is full of Compassion ; the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin ; not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to Repentance : His Mercy is over all his Works ; nor doth he willingly afflict or grieve the Children of Men, but for their own Good ; as a Father pitieth his own Children, so is He Merciful unto them that fear him ;

him; and sheweth the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, that the Goodness of God may lead all Men to Repentance; and causeth Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that Repenteth: He giveth his Angels Charge over good Men, to keep them in all their ways, and at Death to carry their Souls into *Abraham's Bosom*; tho' their Troubles in this World may be many, yet he will Deliver them out of all: He will not suffer them to be afflicted above what they are able to bear, but will in Temptation make a way for them to escape; and though there is no escaping Death, yet even there his Hand will lead us; so that they who Die in his Faith and Fear shall be Blessed; for their Souls shall be in His Hand; and their Bodies, after all, shall enjoy a Glorious Resurrection; and then shall a Day be given them, wherein God will Judge the World in Righteousness, and render to every Man according to the things done in the Body; to them who now by Patience and continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality (of Soul and Body too) he will render Eternal Life; but to such

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as are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, he will render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul that now doeth Evil: These Notions of God are taken out of such known Passages in the Holy Scriptures, that it is needless to refer you to every Verse, or Chapter; and they all give us such a Description of the Nature, Attributes, and Mind of God, which render him, not only the most Glorious, and most Perfect, but also the most Desirable Being in the whole Universe; so that were there any Possibility for common Reason to suppose, that there is no such Deity, it would be for every Good Man's Interest and Security, for every Good Man's Satisfaction and Peace of Mind, and for every Good Man's Eternal Delight and Happiness to Wish, that there were such an Excellent Being.

II. From which Premises I proceed next to shew, what an effectual and True way this Right Belief of God is, to stifle those Excessive and Tormenting Fears, which otherwise People (especially People of Guilty Consciences) must Labour and be in great Anguish

Anguish under: And consequently, that a Right Notion of God, and the sincere Practice of Religion, is the only *Prudent* and *Wise* Course; however some are pleas'd to Despise and Laugh at it. For the clearing whereof I shall endeavour Two things.

I. First to shew, that the True Notions of God give us the Ready way to Preserve us from those Moral Evils which are the Causes of those Excessive Fears, I am now Speaking of.

II. Secondly, that instead of Filling us with Fears, they are very Effectual to Replenish us with all the most Solid and Substantial Comfort, which we are capable of Enjoying in this World; provided still, that we Endeavour by the manner of our Lives to Please God, whom we believe in.

I. First, that the True Notions of God do Readily Tend to Preserve us from those Moral Evils which are the Causes of all Excessive, Anxious, and Tormenting Fears.

Before

Before I proceed upon this Head, I must desire you to observe and consider, that there is a sort of Fear, which we ought not, for several good Reasons, to be without; I mean, a *Religious Fear* of God, or a Devout Reverence and Awe of the Divine Majesty; especially, of his great Power and Justice, though we be comfortably Sensible of the Excellence of other his Divine and Glorious Perfections. This is that Fear of God which the Holy Scripture recommends as the beinning of Wisdom; meaning an Awful Regard of God, not as an Illnatur'd, Spiteful and Mischievous Being, but as a Being that is Essentially Righteous, and a Lover of Righteousness and Righteous Men, and a Punisher of Vice and Immoralities, as well as a Rewarder of Virtues: 'Tis a *Filial* Fear, or such a Dutiful sort of Reverence, as Affectionate and Wise Children have for their Provident Father, who lays Necessary Rules of Virtue before them, and has an Eye upon their Actions, that he may train them up in such Courses as Become Rational Natures, and thereby make them Happy. Though they are very Sensible of his great Affections towards them,

them, and Depend upon his daily Care for them, and confidently expect all possible Good from him, yet they do not presume upon his Tenderneſs ſo far, as to ſlight his Authority over them, or Deſpiſe his juſt Commands, but treat him with that Reſpect, Reverence and Submiſſion, which is a Parent's Right. And ſuch is the Genuine Fear of God, though of far greater Importance, and of far higher Conſequence: As it is attended with Duty and Obedience to Gods Laws, with Faith in his Promiſes, with Truſt and Confidence in his Providence and Care, with Hope in his Mercy, and with Fervent Affection and Love to him for his Goodneſs; ſo it is attended with a Filial and Awful Regard to his Juſtice, with a Pious and Dutiful dread of offending him, and of Provoking his Diſpleaſure. This Religious diſpoſition of Mind is a quite Different thing from that Enormous and Cru- ciating Paſſion, Tumultuating in the Minds of Wretches under the Terrible Apprehenſions of a ſuppoſed Malignant Being; a Degenerate and Slavish Paſſion, accompanied with Diſtruſt and Jealouſies, with Cowardice and Deſpondency,

dency, with Amazements and Horrors, with utter Aversions and Hatred, and with Secret Violent Wishes that there were no such Being, as God, in the whole World. These are Plaguing Fears indeed; and the Moral Evils which Cause them, are, either the Sense of those too too Common Vices, which are acted contrary to the Duties we owe our own selves and others; as the Violation of the Laws of Temperance, Chastity, Justice, Mercy, Charity and the like; or else they are Direct Impieties, Contemptuous Neglects of those Duties we owe the Ever-blessed God: All which Moral Evils, the True Notions of God are Naturally apt to stifle; and consequently to suppress the Mortifying Fears which are caused by them.

As for instance, if we have a Right Notion of God's having Created all things, it will naturally follow, that Heaven and Earth are to serve him; and that all Nations are to Prostrate themselves before him, with this Humble and Just Submission, O come, Let us Worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker. If we have a Right Notion of God's

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Presiding over the World, and of his Directing and Governing all the Affairs of it, 'twill Naturally follow, that we must observe his Laws, submit to his good Pleasure, rely up his Providence, not taking any *Anxious* thoughts for the Morrow, but casting all our Cares upon Him, who careth for us. If we have a Right Notion of God's Perfect Knowledge of all things, and of his Universal Presence, it naturally follows, that we must, not only order our outward Conversation aright, but moreover keep even our Hearts with all diligence, and our Tongues that they Speak no Evil. If we have a Right Notion of God's Power, it naturally follows, that in all Cases we must Humble our selves under the Mighty Hand of God, and above all things stand in Awe of his Threatnings, not putting our Trust in any Child of Man, nor Fearing them that can kill the Body, but are not able to Destroy the Soul; but Fearing Him, who is able to cast both Body and Soul into Hell-fire everlastingly, into Fire Unquenchable. If we have a Right Notion of God's Wisdom, it naturally follows, that we must Resign up our Understandings to the
Belief

A Discourse concerning

Belief of all those things which he hath thought fit to Reveal, though they be Above our Comprehension; that we must always submit to his Dispensations, and without any Dispute or Hesitancy make a due Use of all those Sacred Ordinances which he hath appointed, though they may be counted Foolishness by the Men of this World. If we have a Right Notion of God's Justice, it will Naturally follow, that we must never Murmur at his Providence, but commit our selves to him in well-doing, laying aside every Weight, and the Sin that hath so easily beset us, cleansing our selves daily from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, and working out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling. If we have a Right Notion of God's Goodness, it will naturally follow, that we must Love him with all our Hearts, Souls, and Strengths; that we must Pray daily to him for all we want, and give him Thanks and Praises for all we Enjoy; that we must Resemble him in Compassion and Benignity, and be Followers of him as dear Children, doing all the Good we can, trusting in him continually; believing
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that all things shall work together for Good to them that Love, persevering to the end in well-doing, and patiently waiting for that Crown of Righteousness, which God, the Righteous Judge, will give us in That day. These Divine Notions God hath partly made obvious to our Natural Reason, and chiefly Revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, to stir us up to our several Duties to God and Man, and to Encourage, Animate, and Quicken us in the Practice of them; and any one may see, that they are apt of themselves to cast such a Powerful Influence upon the Minds of all Thinking and Sober People, as is apt to suppress all Vice and Impieties; and consequently to preserve us from those Moral Evils, upon the Commission whereof a very Painful Fear of Punishment doth Naturally and Immediately follow.

II. My next business is, to shew, That instead of filling us with Fears, the right Notions of God are very effectual to replenish us with all the most solid and substantial Comfort, which we are capable of enjoying in this World, provided still that we endeavour by the manner

A Discourse concerning

manner of our Lives to please God, whom we really believe in.

For the clearing hereof, we are to consider our selves in a twofold Capacity: 1. *First*, In a Relative Capacity, as we are Parts of a Nation, whose Common Interest lieth *Abroad*, wrapt up in the *Publick* Interest of all the rest. 2. *Secondly*, In an Absolute Capacity, as we are several particular Persons, whose *Private* Interest or Satisfaction lieth at *Home*.

1. *First*, then, as we are part of a Nation, it must needs be a very great Comfort to all Religious People, who have right Notions of God, that an Alwise, Powerful and Great Deity, is the Sovereign Governor of the whole World: The watchful Eye and daily Care of such a Being, every Nation hath vast need of. For, how many ambitious Men are there in the World, that to advance their Power and Fortunes, do not stick at any sort of Injustice or Villany? With what Arts and Eagerness do they prosecute the blackest Designs? What Straits are they ready to bring their Superiors into by Murmurrings, Lies, Calumnies, Seditious Libels, Formed Plots, and in the end by downright and open Violence?

lence? What Changes are Publick Affairs subject unto, by *Accidents*, not possible to have been foreseen by Humane Providence? And what great Dangers are a People threatned with from Abroad, by the boundless Ambition and restless Endeavours of a Foreign Enemy? In short, though the *Wisdom* of a Nation may (as far as they can) provide against the worst; and the *Strength* and *Force* of a Nation may strive (as far as they can) to prevent the worst; yet a Nation may fall into such untoward Circumstances, that without believing that there is a superintendent Being, who takes greater Care of a People, than they do or can take of themselves, they would find very little Comfort or Satisfaction by living in the World; and would have great reason to wish, either that they had never come into it, or, that since they are in it, they might soon go out of it. Under the pressure of such national Misfortunes, what Comfort can those conceited Philosophers have, who think the World to be govern'd (as it was made) by the Tiltings and Skirmishes of blind Atoms, which, for ought they know, may dash all their

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Fortunes

Fortunes into pieces the next Hour? Those Men, who believe no Felicities in a Future State, and therefore can hope for none, what Comfort can they find in their present Enjoyments, which according to their own Principles, are so very uncertain? They that place their Happiness in Security from External Evils here; how can they have that Security, without depending on a Provident God? But now, what Hopes or Comfort can those pious People want, who are the Friends of God, and study to please him, and are fully assured that he ordereth all things for the best; that he doth not willingly Afflict nor Grieve the Children of Men, and that when he doth Afflict, it is for their own Good? Certainly, no Minds can be more easy under any *Present Events*, none can be less solicitous and concern'd about *Future* ones, than the Minds of those Religious People who make God their Stay, and support themselves by putting their whole Trust in God, and believe that he Governs the World by a gracious and kind Providence, and is deservedly the Hope of all the ends of the Earth, and of them which remain in the Broad Sea. There

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are three Divine Attributes chiefly, the hearty Belief whereof ministreth solid and substantial Comfort to us in all Cases, especially as to Affairs of a Publick Concernment; that is, the *Wisdom, Power, and Goodness* of God. For as his Power executeth his Will, so his Wisdom and Goodness do govern and regulate his Power in all his Dispensations towards Mankind.

1. *First*, It is for our great Comfort, that he is the only *Wise* Being, that thoroughly understands the true Necessities of a Nation, and what are the most proper and safe ways to provide for them. He worketh all things according to the Counsel of his own Will; meaning, according to those wise Reasons, which are the Measures of his good Pleasure, and pursuant to those wise Ends he consults and aims at in all his Works. Accordingly he knows, how to govern the Spirits of disorderly Men, how to restrain and check their Exorbitances, how to over-rule their evil Purposes, how to blast their Designs, and how to take occasion, even by their Sins to promote his own Glory, and the good of them that serve him in Sincerity. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of their

Temptations, that is, out of their Try-als and Afflictions. Though it may be past the reach of humane Eyes to find out a way of escaping; yet it is our very great Comfort, that it is not beyond the Knowledge and Wisdom of that most perfect Being, who reigneth over all, to discover or make an Outlet.

2. Another Ground of our Comfort is his *Power*; That none can resist his Will; and that he is able, as to Destroy, so to Save to the uttermost. Indeed, Divines are wont to distinguish between the absolute and the ordinary Power of God; meaning, that God is able to do every thing that in the Nature of it is possible to be done, or whatever doth not imply a Contradiction, nor is repugnant to his Divine Attributes and Perfections; but yet, that in his Government of the World, he doth nothing but what is agreeable to the Eternal Rules of Wisdom, Righteousness, Goodness, and Mercy. And these being the Laws, which his own Nature hath set him, to Rule the World by, all pious People have the greatest reason to be comforted with an Assurance, that he will order all Publick Affairs,

as it is best and fittest; especially, if a Nation does but mind their *Religious* Part, there is no question, but God is able to do the *Political*; whether with means, or without means, or against means, 'tis all one to his Divine Power. Indeed we are not to expect Miracles (strictly so called) at every turn: But yet to strengthen our Faith, and to raise our Hopes and Comfort on all occasions, God doth not in any Age shut himself out of the World; but many times shews his Power after a very wonderful and stupendious manner, so that his Providence looks *like* miraculous; by restraining the Malice of Devils; by keeping the Devil's Agents under his own Hand; by making strange Impressions upon their Minds; by blasting their Contrivances; by defeating their Designs; nay, by turning their Deliberations and Intentions *against* themselves; and that, after such an unaccountable Manner, at such a nice time, and by such undiscernable, (by us) and such unthought-of Methods, that in the end the Excellence of the Power visibly appears to have been of God; and all Men who have a true Notion of a provident Deity, must

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confess,

confess, that it was indeed God's own Work.

3. A Third Ground of our Comfort, is the right Notion of God's *Goodness*, that adorable and charming Perfection, which is the overflowing Fountain of all the Good in the World; and that which provideth for all his Creatures according to their Natures, Wants, and Capacities, ordering and disposing all things to the best Ends and Purposes. And though the Sins of a Nation do sometimes provoke him to visit them with a Rod, and that severely; yet his Goodness doth still so temper his Chastisements, that they are ever intended for a People's Profit, and when they make a due use of them, do in the end always prove so. In which case People have nothing to do, but by Repentance, and the Reformation of their Hearts and Lives, to answer the Ends of the Divine Providence, and so to repose all their Cares in God's Bosom. Nor can I think, but let the Calamity be what it will, Men who think Religiously of God, and act in a Religious manner, must be very easy in their Minds; especially in comparison of those who have nothing but an Arm
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of Flesh to look unto, or nothing but their own Policy and Strength to rely upon. When a Pestilence rageth, or a terrible War breaks out, what a Comfort is it to believe and consider, that as these Evils are common in the World, so there is an All-wise, Powerful and Good God over all, that Designs those Calamities for our own Advantage, and will certainly turn them for our Advantage, if we be not foolishly wanting to our own selves! And herein the Wisdom of Religion appears, that as it prepares our Minds against the approaching of an Evil, by teaching us to look unto a most Gracious Deity, from whom all our help is to be expected, so it fortifies and cherisheth our Minds under a Calamity, by inspiring us with Faith and Patience, and a strenuous Hope, that all things shall work together for Good to them that love God. Let the World shew us any one Atheist, that hath in such a Case the Heart and Courage of a Religious Person in that day, that can quit himself like a Man indeed, and that dares or can venture his Life and Fortunes upon the Success of Matters, with such Equanimity and Contentedness. No,

no; their present Interest and Satisfaction being the only things their Principles teach them to mind, and their Enjoyments being (as they conceive) liable to the Strokes of unguided Chance; it is not possible for them, either to be easy under the apprehension of any eminent Danger of losing them in this World, or to have the least touch of Hope of having Compensation made them in another.

2. I hope no more is necessary to be said, to shew what great Comforts the true Notions of God are naturally apt to Minister to the Minds of People, considered in a *Relative* Capacity, as they are so many Parts, which make up an whole Nation, and have a Publick Interest concerned in the Publick Interest of the Nation to which they do belong. Let us now, in the Second Place, consider what Comforts all Pious Persons do thereby receive, if we consider them in an *Absolute* Capacity, separately, and by themselves.

Now it is not to be doubted, but that every Man is full of Comfort, when the World goes very well on his side.

side, or when his outward Affairs are in a very prosperous Condition. The Pleasure of it is so great, that instead of exciting them to all possible Acts of Thankfulness and Gratitude to a Good God, (which is the true Use they should make of their Prosperity) it many times Transports them into a scandalous Neglect of those things they are indebted to him for his bountiful Providence. For which Reason, God forwarned the *Jews* so solemnly, Deut. 6. *That when they come into the promised land, and to houses full of good things, which they filled not, &c.* Then [then in their Affluence and Prosperity, then] they should beware lest they forgot the Lord their God. A State of Affliction and a State of Pleasure, are very different things; and such as accidentally, and by reason of our natural Corruption, are apt to have very different Effects upon us; the latter elevates the Minds of Men too high; and the former depresses and makes them sink too low. Now, though a Man's Circumstances may be very melancholy, and his Afflictions very sharp, yet I am confident, that the Acrimony of them may be very much allayed with comfortable Apprehensions, if he has
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a fixt Perswasion of the Existence of a most perfect Being over all, and true Notions of him; especially if he exercises himself in the Practical, as well as in the Notional Part of Religion. As for Instance:

Suppose a Man himself to want those common Satisfactions which other Men enjoy; to be exposed to the World; to be singular in his Circumstances; to want Friends to deliver him out of his Condition, and to be left (as it were) to his own Care and Providence; this must needs be a great Comfort to him, that there is a VVise and Provident Being above, that ordereth all his Dispensations (of his great Goodness) so, that if we do but make a due use of them, they prove the greatest Blessings and Comforts to us; because God designs them as a salutary sort of Discipline to repress and cure our Moral Evils; to make us Serious and Thoughtful; to bring us to Acts of true Repentance and Mortification; to exercise our Faith and Patience; to quicken and heigthen our Devotion; to wean us from the World; to teach us Humility, Self-denial, and Resignation of our selves into the Hands of God; and to make us

us by degrees so to Improve and Perfect our Nature, that it may resemble the Nature of God, in Wisdom, Righteousness, and Sanctity; which some sober Heathens concluded to be the highest Happiness any Man can arrive at; I am sure it is the best Preparation for the Happiness of another World. Now, if a Man takes no Care thus to Answer the great Ends of the Divine Providence, the Fault is his own, and he must blame himself for his dolorous Condition. But if, on the contrary, he maketh such a Religious Use of his Afflictions, as he may and ought to do, he is a very happy Man; nor is it possible for him to be without true Comfort; and in this Sense he may be said to gather Grapes of Thornes, and Figs of Thistles.

Suppose some Cases, (which are not so extraordinary, but that they may be very easily supposed, as the Course of the World goes;) suppose a Man to sojourn in a *Sodom*, a place Infamous for abominable Lusts, for Pride, for fulness of Bread, and for abundance of Idleness, (which was *Lot's* Case;) or, that he be undeservedly oppressed, and persecuted by malicious Men, (which
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was *David's* Case;) or that he be reduced to a forlorn Condition, (which was a great part of *Job's* Case;) or that he be forced to be among Briars and Thorns, and to dwell among Scorpions (which was the Prophet *Ezekiel's* Case;) or that he be brought into danger of a violent and untimely Death, (which has been the common Case of good Men;) In any of such Cases, what Comforts can any one have, equal to His, or like to His, who has these true Notions of God, That he loveth Righteousness; that, as a Father, he correcteth all he Loves for their Good; that he will be with them, and stand by them in Trouble; that not so much as the Hair of ones Head shall fall without his Permission; that the Devils in Hell, and his Agents on Earth, are under his Power; that the light Afflictions which are here for a moment work for us a more Exceeding, and an Eternal Weight of Glory; that God is able to save and deliver all to the uttermost, that come unto him by Jesus Christ; and that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth,

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nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? And can any Man, who disbelieves the Existence of a Provident God, and consequently can have no Hopes, but what depends upon blind Chance, and the undivided Motion of Atoms, and such foolish, trifling, and ridiculous Supports: Is it possible, I say, for that Man to have any solid Comfort, to quiet or cherish his Mind in a Day of Trouble? No, all he can do, pursuant to his Principles, is to Fret, and Grieve, and to complain that blind Chance (to which he trusted) did not happen to fall on his side; and what good can that do him?

Suppose one Case more [than which nothing is more common;] suppose a Man by some natural Disease be thrown upon his Death-bed. At that time every Man needs all the Comfort that is possible to be given, and every prudent Person will, at that time, desire to have it; and can we rationally suppose any Comforts to be compared at that time between the Pious Man's, and those of an Infidel's (if he hath *any*?) There are Three Things, which one ought to employ

employ his most serious Thoughts upon in the time of Health ; more especially in time of Sickneſs ; and moſt eſpecially, when his Sickneſs is apprehended to be Mortal : 1. *First*, How he has ſpent his Life paſt. 2. *Secondly*, What his preſent State is. And 3. *Thirdly*, What State he looks for and expects after his Diſſolution. Now, for Argument-ſake, let us ſuppoſe, That as two Thieves, of very different Minds, were at the ſame time crucified with our Saviour ; ſo two Men, of very different Principles, lay ſtruggling with Death at the ſame time, and in the ſame Chamber ; I mean, a Believer and an Infidel ; and let us then conſider, what Compariſon there is between their Comforts.

1. *First*, then, on the one hand, the Believer reflecting upon his Life paſt, confeſſeth, That though he be fully perſwaded, that there is, verily, a God, an Intellectual and Provident Being over all ; and that, to diſplay and communicate his Goodneſs, he did (when in his Wiſdom he thought it fit) create the World ; and has ever ſince govern'd the rational Part of this

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Lower World, by giving Mankind Laws agreeable to his Essential Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness; yet he himself (God's unworthy Creature) has violated God's Laws by his manifold Follies and Passions; however he is very sorry for those Violations, and hopes that the same Divine Being, who for Wise and Good Ends at first made him, will of his Infinite Benignity have mercy upon him, according to the Riches of his own Goodness. Thus far the Faith and humble Hopes of the Believer, must needs be some Comfort to him. On the other hand, the Infidel confesseth, (if he confesseth any thing) That by *Epicurus*, and others of late, he has been taught, that there is no such Being, as an Intellectual and Provident Deity; that there is nothing in the whole Universe besides accidental Combinations of Atoms, and a vast *Vacuum*, or empty Space, for those frolicksome and unguided Atoms to Dance or Fight in; that there is no natural Justice, Virtue, or Honesty, supposed to be derived from a God; that Religion is only matter of Form, grounded upon Tales that are allowed by the Civil Governors; that in the Course of his
Life

Life (though some Men call it Vicious and Profane, yet) he has obeyed Nature, and followed his Natural Inclinations; and hopes, that Nature is strong, and that such Drugs, and such other Remedies are proper to Restore him to his Health, if Fortune be but kind. Thus far (and no farther) his Comforts go; and his Dependance is on the Strength of Nature, and the Skill of a Physician.

Now in this Case one of these two things must be supposed; either that such a Wretch continues Remorseless, and Hardned, under the Power of these Evil Principles, or not. If you suppose the First, what can be more Miserable in this World, than a State of Insensibility and Stupefaction? For a Man to be (as it were) as unconcerned as a Block, when he is ready to be tumbled out of his All, not to Reflect at all upon his Impious Notions, or Actions; but to be delivered up at last to a Reprobate Mind and a Seared Conscience, such a Condition is most deplorable: I am sure such a Man can have no solid and well-grounded Comfort, who has no Hopes to Revive his Mind, nor any thing to Trust unto,

but the Skill of his Physician, and the strength of his own Nature, which is now Debilitated and well nigh Spent. If you suppose such a Man to be made at last, in some measure, sensible of his Impieties, what Comfort can there be in such a case? How can he Look up to the God of all Comfort, whom he hath so long, and so shamefully Denied; with what Heart can he Hope to be Reconciled to him now? How, in his Extremity, can he go about Things which he never Thought of before; as, Repentance from all Dead Works, the extirpating of all Sinfull Habits, and the Renewing of his whole Mind into a due Frame and Temper? How can he tell, whether he has not Sinned away his Day of Grace? whether his Repentance be Sincere (if he hath any?) whether it doth not proceed meerly from the Terrors of Death? whether God will accept it? and with what sort of Confidence or Comfort can he lye down in his Bed, under such Apprehensions? No, these are too Melancholy considerations to Minister any true Satisfactions at a time when the Devil is very Busie, the Man's Spirits Low, his Pains Acute, and his

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Mind

Mind Confounded and Distracted between small expectation of Living any longer in this World, and great Fears of passing into another. We cannot conceive it possible for one in such a Condition to have the Solaces of a Good Conscience, or to be without the Pains of an Evil one: The Remembrance of so many past Impieties, being so very Bitter, that I believe an Atheist is Averse to nothing more, or Dreads nothing more, than a long Sickness, and a Reflecting Mind.

2. Let us next consider the Difference between the Apprehensions of a Pious Person, and an Infidel, in reference to a *Future* State, after Dissolution. He, on the one hand, believes, That as there is an Intellectual and Provident Deity over all, so this Deity has given Laws to Mankind, and thereby has made them Accountable for their Actions; and accordingly he must believe, not only from the Holy Scriptures, but from True, Philosophick Reason, that Death doth not bring any Man to his full End, but that his Soul continues in a State of Permanency, capable of Rewards or Punishments, suitable to a Man's Actions, and that the Just and
Good

Good God will award to every one, a State of Happiness, or a State of Misery. These are such Truths, as have been acknowledged by many of the Sober Heathens themselves, who were Guided by Reason, and concluded upon one thing from another, by Rational, Necessary and Undeniable Consequence. Now, a Pious Man, who is well furnished with these Principles, and whom we suppose in time of Sickness to Act upon these Principles, and accordingly Prepares himself, to the utmost of his Power, for the Happiness of a Future State, he must needs Dye with Comfortable Hopes, and a Fair Prospect of Felicity in another World, to be received at the Hands of that most Amiable and Desirable Being, of whom the Holy Scripture gives this Ravishing Character, That *God is Love*, Love in his Essence and Nature, Love in its Highest Perfection, and to its utmost Extent.

He, on the other hand, conceives, That Life is no substantial thing, but only an Accidental Modification and Quality of the Body, as Colour is upon a Wall; That when the Body Dieth, Life is utterly Destroyed and reduced

to Nothing ; That a Man's Soul is not Immortal, or Surviving ; That there is no Just or Omnipotent Deity to be Dreaded ; no Spirit, but what is the Creature of our own Fancies and Fears, Inhabitants in our Brain only ; nor any Punishments to be Feared, but what are Politick Inventions, Designed on purpose to Discourage People from the pursuit of their Pleasures, like an Empty Hat, and Doublet, and crooked Stick, set up to Frighten Birds from the Corn. Now these his Principles are either Fixt in him to the very last, or Not. If they be so Deeply Rooted in his Mind, as to be Immoveable, with what Comfort can he think of going out of this World, though he hath no Fears of a Future State, or of Punishment in a Future State ? With what Comfort can he reflect upon the past Solaces of Life, which are all now ending and coming to Nothing ? With what Comfort can he think of leaving and losing all, which were the only things he valued ? With what Comfort can he consider, how he is now to be Bereft and Stript of all his Darling Fortunes ? What will become of them, when he is gone ? Who will Inherit that

that which by sly Arts and open violence he has gotten and saved? And whether his Immediate Heir, or some body after him, will not consume all, and bring all to Nothing? In this case, all that he Apprehends is a plain Nothing; for his Hopes are, that he himself will be brought to Nothing; and his Fears are, that what he leaves behind him may be reduced to Nothing; so that here is Nothing of True Comfort, Nothing indeed, but what is cause of Grief, Melancholy, and Dejection, to one of those Principles. In this way of Reasoning, I suppose the Man's Athiestical Opinions to be *Fixt* and *Settled*.

But now, suppose that he has not so far hardned himself, but that a Rouzing Conscience Disquiets him, or the visible approach of Death makes him suspect the worst; and that the Doctrines of *Epicurus*, and *Lucretius*, and the Author of the *Leviathan*, may possibly have mislead him; what Comfort can he have in that case? Why, the most we can suppose is, That he is Uncertain and Mistrustful in his own Mind, that *Epicurus* might (as some Writers say he did) vend Athiestical Doctrines in

a Jocular Humour, and to sport himself by deluding the Populace; and that *Lucretius* had the Vanity (as other Poets have had) to shew his Wit in making Verses, and his Skill in making the World too; and that his other Tutor had a Selfish Design in Publishing his Athiestical Doctrines (though against his Conscience) and to Heal all with a Salvo, That a Man may say or do any thing, as long as his Heart does not go along with his Tongue, or Hand: Suppose, I say, that one who has suffered himself to be instructed by these Writers, and at last, when he is ready to Die, beginneth to Doubt of their Doctrines; with what Comfort or Common Satisfaction, think you, can such a Misguided Man go out of the World, &c. when he *must* go? The Nature of Things is not to be destroyed or altered by Opinions of them, though never so strong and violent. If there be a Future State (as certainly there is) though some Deluded Men think it not probable, yet it doth not follow, that therefore there really is none: And when a Dying Man begins to suspect whether there is one or No; the most that can be said for him, is, that he

he Opines and Conjectures, and Fancies on his own side, and rather Wishes there were none, than Believes it; and what are Wishes in Comparison of Conviction and Proof? and what is the Comfort that is grounded upon Uncertainties? Suppose again, that after all Uncertainties and Fluctuations of Mind, the Dying Man, upon Second and better Thoughts, begins to conceive, That most Probably on the other side there may be a Future State of Happiness and Misery; with what tolerable Satisfaction can he then think of it, when he is unprepared for it? The least that his own Reason can tell him (if he has any Reason left him) is, that very probably he may find a God, and a Just, Powerful God, whose Existence he was Taught to Disbelieve; and that he may find an Hell, which he was told was neither in the Air, or Waters, or Earth; and that he may find Ghosts and Devils, which he was informed by the *Leviathan*, were only Inhabitants of the Brain, raised up by Fears; and that he may find Hell Torments too (and those Intolerable and Everlasting) which he was made to believe were nothing, but a sort

of Priapus, contrived by Politicians, and set up by Priest-craft. Now, with what Comfort can you suppose such a Man to Die; who, either goes off the Stage in a State of utter Insensibility and Infidelity, or else advanceth no further, than Conjectures and Probabilities? Such a Man's Comfort can be, either Nothing at all, or Nothing to the Purposes of a Wise Man.

I have now ended the Arguments on the First Practical Point, proposed in the beginning of this Discourse; namely, that we ought to Possess our Souls with a Firm and Immoveable persuasion, that there really is a most perfect Being, a Wise, Provident, and Good God over the whole Universe, and Acting in it. And I have Insisted the longer and the more Particularly upon this Head, because all the Branches of Religion are Derived, and do Naturally Spring from it: So that they who are Enemies to Religion, have no other way to Destroy it, but by exposing the Belief of a most Perfect, Intellectual Deity, both as an Irrational Principle, inconsistent with true Reason, and Philosophy, and as an Improper and Impolitick Principle for People to entertain,

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considering how it serves to Disquiet and Torment their Minds, and to Rob them of those Solaces of Life, which otherwise they might Enjoy with much Security and Easiness of Mind. In answer to the First of these Two Objections, I have shewed, as briefly as I could on such a Copious Subject, That unless we acknowledge the Existence of a most VVise and Beneficent Being to have been the Cause of the whole Universe, it is impossible to give a Rational, or Satisfactory Account of the Cause of those Common Appearances which are discoverable in the Material and most Sensible Parts of the World; and more particularly, of the Curious and Useful Structure of Humane Body; much less can any fair Account be given of the Nature, Faculties and Operations of Humane Mind, without Resolving all into the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of a most Perfect Deity, who is the Author of Nature, and doth Virtually and Eminently Contain in himself, all those Perfections which are in Nature. This is an easie and clear Solution of all things, and that which all Unprejudiced Minds are ready to close with, because it gives a
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Natural Derivation of all the several Perfections that are in the World, from the Highest to the Lowest Being; and all is grounded upon that Rational and Satisfactory Principle, That God hath given a Law to all his Creatures, which in their several Degrees must be constantly obeyed by them.

In answer to the Second Objection against the Prudential Part, or Wisdom of Religion, I have shew'd, that though some Men are Disquieted with Dismal Fears of a God, and are therefore looked upon as very Fools, by some pretending Philosophers; yet it is Impossible for the most Reputed Wits, by endeavouring to Throw off the belief of God, thereby to Deliver Themselves or others from those Fears, as long as those Fears are grounded (as they always are) either upon Wrong Apprehensions of a Deity, or upon an Evil Conscience of a Man's own Immoralities, whereas, had they True Notions of God, and were Careful to lead their Lives accordingly, they would be so far from being Tormented with any Anxious Fears, that, whether Living, or Dying, they would be fullest of True, Solid and Substantial Comfort; which

which shews, what a Wise, as well as Rational thing Religion is, and how it would be for the true Interest and Satisfaction of all People, to have a Fix'd Belief of the Existence of a most Wise and Good God, and to express it by a Suitable Practice.

C H A P. VI.

THE next Practical Inference which follows upon the Belief of a Deity, is, That we must endeavour daily to Improve and Increase a Religious Sense of him. By a Religious Sense of God, I mean, such Lively Conceptions of his Divine Being and Glorious Perfections, as will stir us up to profound Adorations of his Super-excellent Majesty, and Engage our Affections to Him, and make us Really to obey His Will in all Things, as it becometh Creatures who are bound to ascribe all Honour, Glory and Power to that Divine Being, for whose Pleasure they were and are Created. Such a Sense of God, I say, we must daily endeavour to Improve; that it may still have
the

Brisker Influence upon our Minds and Actions. And this Inference follows necessarily upon the Former. For, if the Belief of the Existence of such a Wise and Desirable Being, doth at present so Answer our Reason, and yieldeth such Satisfaction and Comfort to our Minds, we cannot endeavour enough to Improve our Minds in the true Knowledge of him; because the more Sensible we are of him, the more Satisfaction and Comfort we receive still; and our Rational Appetites are Insatiable without God, who is supposed to be the Immense Abyss of Knowledge and Comfort. This is so Manifest of it self, that it needeth no Proof.

The only thing then to be considered here, is, what are the True Ways of Improving our Sense of God? And before *That* can be well shewed, it is necessary to Inquire, what are the *Causes* of Atheism; that so, by Removing those Causes, our way towards Improving our Selves in the Belief and Sense of God, may be the clearer, and the more easie.

Now

Now the Causes of Atheism are many, and we may well call them a Legion; for there are a great many Devils in it. But because they are very unpleasing Objects, I shall take notice of as few of them as I can.

I. There is, First, in Atheism, a Spirit of *Envy*; whereby Men are Excited to Rob God of the Glory of his infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and to Ascribe every thing in the World to meer *Matter* and *Fortune*; or to the various *Concretions*, *Secretions* and *Motions* of Senseless *Atoms*, without the Directions and Government of a Provident Deity.

I do not mean, that a Spirit of Envy, or any other Vice, is *Antecedent* to all Notions of a Deity, so as to prevent them. For *Epicurus* himself acknowledged such Notions of a God, as were in some Sense Natural; and which he called *πρόληψεις*, that is, *Anticipations*, and *Præ-notions* of a Deity; Notions, which no Atheist was ever some time without, or will ever be able, whatever Arts he may use, Finally and Utterly to Conquer: But my meaning is, that there are some Passions in Humane Nature, which though they cannot wholly

wholly obliterate all Notions of a Deity, yet in Time, and by Degrees, may serve to Deface them; so far, at least, as to suppress the Active Power, Vigour, and Energy of them. And of these Passions I reckon that of *Envy* to be a considerable one: This Notion perhaps may be thought a Cause of Atheism quite out of the Common View: But that it may appear Rational, let us Reflect a little upon the Instance of the Apostate Angels, now called Devils. Those Angels (while they were yet in Heaven) Reflecting upon the Gloriousness of their Nature, and the Excellence of their Faculties, thought themselves fit to be *Equal* with God in Majesty, Authority and Power: For which Presumptuous Reach, God justly threw them out of their Glorious Estate and Habitation, and cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkness, to be reserved (for their Final Punishment) unto the Judgement of the Great Day. Now, though these Evil Angels have not obliterated their Notions of a Just and Provident God, but do still Believe, and Tremble too; yet it has been their Constant Practice, ever since, (as far as their Chains will suffer

suffer them to go) out of a Principle of *Envy*, to draw the Minds of Mankind off (as far as 'tis possible) from their most Glorious Maker, and to bring them to such a State of Stupidity and Sottishness, as to be guilty (especially the Unphilosophical and Vulgar part of Mankind) of the grossest Idolatry; so as to Worship, not only the Vilest parts of the Creation, Cats, Crocodils, Leeks and Onions (as the *Egyptians* did) but even Images and Statues, the Works of Mens Hands, as many of the Common *Pagans* did. All which the Devils did out of *Envy* to their Creatour, to Derogate from that Divine Honour, of which they thought themselves Worthy, and out of Spite and Hatred to that Divine Majesty, which had (though Justly) Degraded them.

And we have Reason to think, that this Principle of Envy worketh still in the Hearts of Studied and Contemplative Atheists to this day; that no Wisdom, Greatness and Power may be acknowledged or thought Superiour to their *Own*. This I take to have been one Reason of *Lucretius's* Atheism, that he observed, *Vis abdita quædam*, some
Hidden

Hidden Force and Power, which pulled down all the Lofty things in the World, and Destroyed Over-swollen Greatnesses. It was *Envy* at that Sovereign Being, who was able to Destroy His and his Followers High Imaginations, that no such superintending Being should be Thought on, much less Worshiped and Adored. And the same Reason (I doubt not) moved the Author of the *Leviathan* (though in one of his other Books) to tell us, that (supposing the Existence of a God) he has no Right of Reigning over Men, and of Punishing those who transgress his Laws, but only from his *Irresistible Power*. All which expressions very plainly shew, that the Greatness of God is one thing, which, though those Atheists could not but Naturally *Own*, yet in Time they came to Envy it, and endeavour'd, by degrees, that all other People too might Envy it, and hate it, as well as themselves, so as to Resist it, were it in their *Power*: So that the Enviars of God, in Point of Religion, are very *Like* unto those (if they are not the very *same*) who are Enemies to a *Regulated Monarchy* in Point of Civil Government: Though Democracy be the very *Worst* of Governments, yet some Men Love it, because they

Envy

Envy the Preheminence and Dignity of the *Throne*, and the several *Ranks* of *Nobility* that are *About* it; and hate all *Quality* which is *Above* and *Superior* to their *Own*. So do the Devils envy God; and so do the Instruments of the Devils imagine, that there neither is, nor ought to be any Being superior to them. This I take to be a great Ground of Atheism; and that on which they build such monstrous Absurdities (as I shall instance in hereafter) that one would think it impossible for any Rational Creatures to believe them, were not the belief of them founded upon a devilish Principle of utter *Abhorrence* of an Allwise and Powerful Deity, and a Satanical Spite and Envy towards such a Deity, lest People should go on to believe that there is a Being, more excellent than *themselves*, acting in the World, and presiding over it. Rather then they will admit such a Deity, they will Deify senseless, stupid, and dead Matter, and worship Matter, as some out of Ignorance have worshipped Stocks and Stones.

2. Another Cause of Atheism, is, Diabolical *Pride*, or *Self-conceitedness*. That Divine Philosopher, *Plato*, took notice

of two Sorts of Atheists in his time: Of some that were lead, by the Conscience of their great *Immoralities*, to disbelieve the Existence of a Just Deity: Of others he gave this Character, that though by their Natural Temper they were inclined to Justice, and avoided the Conversation of wicked Persons, and loved honest Men, yet they were a *conceited* Generation, and affected Singularity, desiring to be thought wiser and more knowing than the generality of Mankind, and pretending to the greatest Wisdom; tho' at the same time they laboured under very gross Ignorance, especially concerning the things of God. It is most certain, That as there is a Principle of *Vanity* in us All, which is the Cause of many subsequent Inconveniencies; so there is a *Conceitedness* of Humour, and *Pride* of Heart, which betrays some Men to the Belief of many odd and groundless Notions. Upon reading History, (especially the *Roman*) they Fancy themselves fit to be Senators and States-men. Upon looking into Politics, they think themselves some of the ablest Men to Govern, and give Laws to a Nation. And upon Dabbling in Philosophy,

Philosophy, they imagine themselves furnish'd with Wit enough to give a rational Account of all the things in Nature, without being beholding to any Notions of an Intelligent Deity; and the first Efforts of their Skill are commonly made against God Almighty; that by such a bold Attempt they may the more *Signalize* their Parts, and Exalt themselves in the Opinion of the Illiterate Vulgar, though perhaps they sometimes act against their Consciences, and take Pleasure in deceiving People with Pretences, which they themselves have made only colourable, and know them to be no other than *Jest* and *Show*. Some Learned Men have observed of that Ring-leader of our Modern Atheists, *Epicurus*, that though he discarded all Notions of a Provident Deity, yet to avoid popular Hatred, and the Censure of the Laws, he set up a *Democracy* and *Commonwealth* of Gods, a Rabble of Corporeal, but Thin, Etherial Deities, not having any thing to do with Mankind, but leading a Quiet and Careless Life somewhere *Between* two *Worlds*, as *Between* two *Woods*; least a casual Fall, or Broke on either side, should chance

to Destroy them, and Knock their Quasi-Brain out, and Un-atomize their Quasi-Flesh, and Quasi-Blood (for that, as Cicero tells us, was that Conceited Philosopher's Phantastical Notion of his Deities). But good Authors tell us, That he invented and scatter'd these silly Notions about, *Jocandi causa*, in a Jocular Humour, sporting himself in a way of deluding People, and priding himself for his Abilities of Deceiving and Cheating the poor ignorant Multitude. Such is the Temper of conceited Opiniators, that they will vend any Doctrines, though never so false, out of Affectation of Singularity, that they may seem more knowing than the generality of Mankind, and thereby get themselves such a Name as Simon Magus had at Samaria, who boasted that himself was some Great One; and all this, that he might bewitch the People, Acts 8. Would it not be very strange, should a Man of Sense endeavour by strength of Argument, to prove that there is no Motion in the World? And yet that famous Philosopher Zeno did stiffly and subtilly maintain that very Paradox; though at the same time he confuted himself by the Motion of his

own Tongue and Hand. Questionless he did it upon a Principle of Vanity, to shew his Parts, and for the Pleasure and *Pride* he took in puzzling other Mens Understandings, by arguing against the clearest and most obvious thing in the whole Universe. To believe like other Men, and to Talk like other Men, is not the ready way to be *taken* Notice of, but rather to be *Hid* like one that goes in a Crowd; and therefore proud Men love to step out of the way, and flourish it by themselves, like Empericks upon the Stage, to draw People together to them, to be admired by People, and to value themselves for their Skill in befooling People into the belief of any Absurdities. And of all the Empericks in the World, those are the most remarkable for *Pride* and *Conceitedness*, who *Quack* in Philosophy, to make People believe that there is no such Wise and Provident Being, as we call God. *David* observed of some Wretches in his time, that they were *so Proud, that they cared not for God, neither was God in all their thoughts*, Psalm 10. In After-ages, *Epicurus* endeavoured to chase away all Notions of a Superintending Deity;

not only out of his own Mind, but out of the Minds of all others also: And some of his Followers in Philosophy since, have made use of his Arguments to do the like; thinking it the noblest Victory, if they can be too hard for God; and for their Immortal Honour, if they can make Profelytes to their Infidelity; though it be only among those who have not Skill enough to distinguish the pretending Philosopher from the Fool.

3. Besides this Spirit of Pride, there is a *vicious Sensuality of Temper*, and great *Immorality* in the Lives of some Men, which doth naturally dispose them for the Entertainment of Atheistical Opinions. This was another sort of Men, which *Plato* took notice of in his days; Men, who together with an Opinion, that all things were destitute of Gods, (for so he speaks) were carried away with the Intemperance of Pleasures and Pain, being Persons otherwise valuable enough for good Memories, and quick Parts. And without all dispute, *Debauchery* must needs fill a Man with many *dark Thoughts*, and with such a perfect Hatred of a Just God, as by degrees prevails with him for the Interest of
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of his Lusts, and for the Quiet of his Mind, to deny the Existence of such a Being. For as long as one is possess'd with True Principles of Religion, and retains a lively and active Belief of an All-seeing, Powerful, and Righteous God, that will render to all Mankind according to their Works, so long it is impossible for him to pursue an evil Course of Life in quiet, or to do a wicked Action, so as to have Peace in his own Conscience; because in such a Case the Sense of Guilt is always attended with Remorse and Pain in some degree or other; especially when he comes to *Reflect*, and to entertain *Cool Thoughts*: So that there is a Necessity for him, either to forsake his Vices, or to part with his Religious Principles, which disquiet him in the Enjoyment of his Vices; or else to be at perpetual Variance with himself, his own Mind still being his Enemy, disturbing his Repose, and imbittering his Pleasures. Now, when Men are come into this streight, it is so natural to them, to consult the Ease of their Minds, and to be fond of their Lusts, that there is too often a willingness to part with their troublesome Principles of Religi-

on. And hence they *wish*, there were no God; and thence proceed to *Conjecture*, that for ought they know there *may* be none; and so by degrees harden themselves in a strong Opinion, that really there is no such Being; but that all things came originally by Chance, and still fall out by Chance: And all this proceeds from the secret Respect and Favour they bear to their own lew'd Inclinations, that without any present Regret they may commit Adultery, follow Drunkenness, play the Hypocrites, execute Malice and Revenge, Lye, Defraud, Oppress, and act all manner of Injustice, that serves their own private Interest, and is agreeable to their profligate Dispositions. So that it is not for want of right *Reason* that Men are Atheists, but for want of orderly *Wills*, and regular *Affections* and *Inclinations*. The Voice of Nature proclaimeth a Deity so loud, the Consent of all Nations is such an Eccho to it, the Notices of Good and Evil, which are in our common Humane Nature, are so very plain, and the Suffrage of every ones private Conscience is so home, that Men of free and unprejudiced Minds could never
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be Infidels, were it not for those vicious Lusts, which by little and little Delude and Impose upon their Understandings. St. Paul, speaking of a *Good Conscience*, saith, *that some having put it away, concerning the Faith made Shipwreck*, 1 Tim. 1. 19. meaning, That being drawn into an evil Course of Life, they were drawn into a State of Infidelity too. And speaking of some *Silly Women*, he observ'd, 2 Tim. 3. 6. that they were *led Captive, being laden with Sins, led away with divers Lusts*. Which shews, that Vice lendeth a great hand in introducing People into Errors; and it is most certain, that nothing doth more Powerfully and more Naturally introduce them at last into down right Atheism. For the Common Notion of God is, that he is a Being Pure and Holy, Just and Powerful; whence it follows, that he *must* and *will* Punish whatsoever is contrary to the Purity and Holiness of his own Nature; and from the fear of that Punishment, no wicked Person can any ways shelter himself for a Moment, (if he continues in a State of Wickedness) but by taking up a sturdy Disbelief of such a Being. And what but his own Lusts
can

can so easily prevail with him to close with such a monstrous Absurdity? No; 'tis his vicious Will and impure Affections, which Govern his Understanding, and Toll him on to believe, not what is fittest, but what he thinks safest for him to believe; not what is True in the Nature of the Thing, but what is Grateful and Agreeable to his Case; not what Impartial Reason, or the Scripture Dictates, but what is suitable to his own Sensual Appetite.

4. Another Cause of Atheism is, a *wrongful Use of Philosophy*. True Philosophy leads us from our sensible Observations and Experience of an *Effect*, to some Knowledge of its *Cause*; and from our view of that *Subordinate Cause*, Philosophy leads us on to some Knowledge of a *Superior Cause*; and so still *upwards* to the Knowledge of the *First Cause* of all things. Philosophy shews us, That the First Cause could not be caused by any other, (for that would be a Contradiction and Impossible) but that it is Self-existent, or Independent, as to its Being, Nature, and Perfections. Hence it follows Philosophically, (or, according to the strict and plain Truth

Truth of Reason) That that Independent Being which is the Original Cause of all the Perfections that are in Subordinate Beings, and of all their Operations, must contain Virtually and Eminently in it self all those Perfections and Powers (for otherwise it could not be the Cause of them). Being thus arrived by the help of Philosophy, to the *Top* and *Mirror* of Perfection, true Philosophy leads us next *downward*, to observe those several Perfections and Powers which are *derived* to several Beings from the Supreme and most Perfect Cause of all. And here True Philosophy teacheth us, That those Perfections are of an higher or a lower Nature, according as the Beings, to which those Perfections are given, are in an higher or lower Classis, or Order. Some are endued with Life, Sense, and Reason also; as the Souls of Mankind: Some with Life and Animal Perception only; as Brute Creatures on the Earth, and in the Waters, which are meerly Sensitive: Some with bare Life, or an inward Principle of Activity; as Trees, and other Beings, which are called Vegetables: And some with a Power of constant Durability; as the Stars, Firmament,

mament, Earth, and all Bodies that are inanimate or void of Life, and incapable of perpetuating a Succession of their Kind by Semination. Now, as those various Creatures demonstrate the admirable Skill and Contrivance of a most Wise and Powerful Cause; so, True Philosophy shews, That the several Subordinate Perfections in *Them* are originally owing to an *Immense Fountain* of All Perfection, capable of communicating all sorts of Perfections out of its own infinite and overflowing Humility; because nothing can give to another, what it hath not formally or virtually in *it Self*. Thus True Philosophy leadeth us unto a First Cause of All things, which we call God; and derives all the Perfections in the Universe from a most Perfect Being, which is God; and teacheth us, that as God made All things, so it is God that supports All things, and contains All things, and in a qualified Sense, *Is* All things; meaning, that God hath the Powers, Faculties, and Perfections of All things, *Virtually, Eminently, and Transcendently* in *Himself*.

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See now, in short, what a wrongful Use some Men make of Philosophy, and how it introduces Atheism. They pretend, First, (though against all Sense and Reason) that all the *Substance* that is in the whole World, whether in the Skies, or in the Earth, or in the Waters, was from all Eternity Uncreated, Unmade, Unproduced by any other Being whatsoever. They pretend, Secondly, that this Eternal Chaos, and Confused Heap of Matter, jumbled together without any Beginning, did by degrees at last fall into that beautiful Frame and admirable Order, which we behold in the Universe; some *Brisk* Particles combining together to make the Sun, Moon, and Stars; some *Frolicksome* Atoms dancing with one another to make the Air and Winds; some meeting together in a *Wet Club* to make Seas, Rivers, Vapours, and the like; some (the more *Melancholy* and *Dull* sort) tumbling together to make Minerals, Mud, Clay, Wood and Stones; and some that had better luck than all the rest, Conspiring together (though without any Forecast or Sense) to make all sorts of Plants and Animals; and to Stock the Earth with Mankind also.

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These Wise and Grave Philosophers pretend moreover, that this lucky Trick was done by meer *Chance* and *Accident*, and that no Contriving or Understanding Agent had an hand in Making the World, though the several Parts of it, and the admirable Harmony of the whole, shew the plainest Signatures and Characters of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness: So that all these Pretences do manifestly and directly tend to destroy all Notions of a first Intelligent Cause, the Great Author of Nature; that is, a Deity.

They pretend again, That since the Casual Formation of the Universe, all things which have been done, came only from the *Necessary Motions* of stupid dead Matter; that the Beauty, Order and Regularity, which is still in the Universe, proceeds from the necessary Motion of various Bodies; that the supposed Circumvolutions of the Sun, Moon, and other Stars; the Salutary Vicissitudes of Summer and Winter; the useful Variety of Weather; the Growth and Propagation of Vegetables; the Production of Animals; the Preservation of Male and Female; nay, the Formation of Mankind too, doth
solely

solely depend upon the necessary Motion of senseless Matter: And not only so, but moreover, that *Thinking and Reasoning* in Mankind, and all *Virtues*, both *Intellectual* and *Moral*, and all *Humane Actions*, originally depend upon the *Necessary Motions* of Matter, void of all Cogitation and Life, and pressing upon our outward Senses, and so *forcibly* causing such and such *Passions* and *Practices*. All which Pretences naturally tend to Destroy all Notions of a Provident Being, that Steers and Governs Nature, and worketh all things according to the Counsel of his Will, as the Holy Scripture tells us; but, as these Men would persuade us, has nothing to do in the whole World.

They pretend further yet, That the Souls of Men are not Substances distinct from their Bodies, but only Modes and Qualities of their Bodies, like Colours upon Wainscot, that they are destroyable in their Nature, and are actually Destroyed and Annihilated at Mens Deaths; that there is no such thing as an Invisible Power, or an Immortal Spirit; and therefore no Divine Spirit to *Take* an Account; nor any created Spirit to *Give* an Account of
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ones Actions: And these Pretences immediately tend to Destroy all Notions of a *Righteous* Being, that will render to every Man according to his Works.

Thus Philosophy, which in its Purity and Truth leads us to the Adoration of a most Glorious Deity, as it is Abus'd and Corrupted leads Men to Atheism; and shews it self by that abominable Dissolution of Manners, which St. Paul particularly describes, Rom. i. 29, &c. viz. *Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness, Envy, Murther, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whisperings, Backbitings, Hatred of God, Despitefulness, Pride, &c.* So that Men, who are so Atheistical in Point of Practice, may be very reasonably concluded to be downright Atheists in Point of Principle.

5. Not but that there is another great Cause of Atheism yet, and that a finishing Cause; namely, a sad *Insensibility* and *Reprobation* of Mind, which such Haters of God are at last by a *just Judgment* delivered upon to. By St. Paul's Words, 2 *Thess.* 2. 11. we find, That God doth sometimes send Men strong
Delusions,

Delusions, so that they believe a Lye: And Rom. I. speaking of those, who did not retain God in their Knowledge, (that is, did not Answer their Verbal acknowledgment of God by their suitable Practices) he says, That God gave them up to Uncleaness, Verse 24. to vile Affections, Verse 26. and to a Reprobate Mind, Verse 28. The meaning of which several Phrases, is not, that God doth at any time, by any Influential or Immediate Act of his own, Force or Tempt Men to Sin; God forbid! But that in Vengeance for their Wilfulness and Hardness he doth in a judicial Way leave them to Themselves; so that they Sin through the Lusts of their own Hearts, as it is exprest, Rom. I. 24. or through the Power of the God of this World, (that is, the Devil) who blindeth the Minds of them which believe not, as it is, 2 Cor. 4. 4. The Result of which Observation is, That wicked People may Sin away their Opportunities of God's Special Assistance, and the Favour of his Restraining Hand, by abandoning themselves to the impetuous Guidance of their own Lusts, &c. by forfeiting that Measure of Divine Grace, which is promised to the Hum-

ble only. Hence the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 6.* That it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance; because when they Renounce their Baptismal Vows, and Apostatize from the Faith, (which is the Apostle's meaning in that place) they are left by God's just Judgment to their own wicked Selves, and to the Conduct of the Devil; so that it is a very difficult matter, morally Impossible, and next to an absolute Impossibility, to Reclaim them, without the extraordinary Power of God, which yet he has not promised to such vile Wretches.

And, if this be the Case of many, who believe in God, though it be but Superficially, and in their Works deny him, we have reason to fear much rather, that it may be the Case of those who *Disown* his very Existence, not in their Practice only, but even upon an *avowed and studied Principle*; and for Reasons pretended to be drawn from Serious Arguments. 'Tis Great Justice in God utterly to forsake such as seriously and purposely Forsake and Abandon Him. And that in Fact he doth
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so, is the more probable, because, in defending their Infidelity they catch at Fancies so monstrously Absurd and Senseless, that one would think Men could not possibly entertain them, were they not deliver'd up to a State of Blindness and Stupidity.

If you press them to give Reasons of the admirable Frame of all things in the World; of the Regularity of Nature, and how that Regularity continues without Interruption; of the Ends and Uses to which every thing is fitted after a most harmonious Manner, for the welfare of the whole Universe; of the Motion of all Bodies; of the Formation of Animals of all Kinds; of the constant Conservation of both Sexes for the Propagation of Animals; of the Artificial Structure of Mankind in particular; nay, of the Fabrication of any one part in Humane Body; of the Nature of a Man's Soul; of its Vital Union to a Composition of Flesh, Blood, and Bones; of its several Powers, Faculties and Operations; and of Ten thousand Instances in Nature more; if, I say, you urge these pretending Philosophers to give true Philosophical or convincing Reasons of

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them,

them, they are at a loss after all their Prattle of Motion and Matter; they betake themselves to ridiculous Shifts, lay the strength of their Cause upon bold and magisterial Affirmations without Proof, entangle themselves in Senseless, Absurd and Inconsistent Subterfuges; and yet are impatient of Contradiction; and are apt to use hard Words instead of Arguments.

If you ask them particularly of the first Original of Mankind, they will tell you (if they go upon the Principles of their old Atheistick Leaders) that People were casually Generated of Senseless Atoms at the first, either out of some Putrefaction in the Earth, like Snails, though of different Shapes and Figures; or in the Bellies of Fishes, till they could shift a little for themselves, and were then thrown out upon the dry Earth, there to Spawn; or else that Mankind was all produced of Eggs, that grew out of the Earth by its Superfatation Power, (like Toad-Stools) and in their Infant-Condition were fed with Streams of Milk which flowed out of the Clefts which the Eggs had made, till they were able to Live and Generate of themselves: These
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and many Monstrous and Ridiculous Absurdities more, they have recourse to, that they may salve Difficulties; rather than they will own the Notion of an All-wise and Just God, which makes it sadly probable, that such Men are *deliver'd* up by the Just God to the Devil and their own *Imaginations*, to believe a Lye.

C H A P. VII.

HAVING thus seen the Principal Causes of Atheism, we may now the more easily discover what ready Course we are to take, that we may improve in our Minds a Sense of God.

The way in *General*, is to clear our Minds of all vicious Affections and Prejudices, so that we may be able to receive Truth in its Native Simplicity. *If any Man will do God's Will, (saith our Saviour) he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self, John 7. 17.* And it is most certainly so in other Cases, as
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well as in searching into the Grounds of Christianity: None are so able to discover Truths, or to judge of Doctrines, as those who are of Virtuous and Pious Hearts. Such Men have a better Title to the Divine Assistances, and are too more genuinely disposed to be enlightned by the Truth, than such as are led away by their Heart's Lusts. For all Vice gives a Tincture to the Understanding, as the Suffusion of the Jaundice does to the Eye, which Presents things to it under a wrong Colour: And when *Prejudice* too *Combines* with ones Lusts, it creates not only an *Aptness* to be deceived, but moreover a *Willingness* to run away with wrong Notions; especially, if those Notions do Countenance and Encourage ones Vices. And hence it comes to pass, That People of corrupt Inclinations and debauched Lives, are at last corrupted in their very Principles, so that they first *wish* there were no God, and then readily hearken to any colourable Arguments, which serve, as they think, to confute God's Being. Therefore, the most effectual Course we can take, to Improve in our Minds a true Sense of God, is to Banish from

us those evil Passions, Imaginations, and Prejudices, which naturally serve to hinder Men from believing aright; as foolish Popularity and Applause hindered those *Jews*, whom our Saviour reprehended, *John* 5. 44.

But, more particularly, to Improve in us a Sense of God, these Five Things are very Proper and Necessary:

- I. *First*, To Love that most Perfect and Adorable Being, with all our Hearts.
- II. *Secondly*, To have Modest and Humble Thoughts of our own Capacities.
- III. *Thirdly*, To follow that Holiness, without which we cannot see God.
- IV. *Fourthly*, To gather Pious Meditations from the Works of God.
- V. And *Fifthly*, To addict our selves to a strict and constant Course of Devotion.

I. *First*, To Love that most Perfect and Adorable Being, with all our Hearts. Love is such an Affection of the Soul, as makes the Mind delight to Dwell
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upon the Object of ones Affection; and thereby to make our *Opinion* of that Object still the Greater and Greater; especially if the Nature of the Object be infinitely Amiable, as God's Nature is. His Will is in all things most perfectly conformable to the Eternal Rules of Reason and Righteousness; his Goodness is Overflowing and Boundless; his Mercies over all his Works, and all his Ways equal. In short, all those moral Virtues and Perfections which are so amiable amongst Mankind, and so powerfully Attract our Affections to one another, they are infinitely greater in the most Blessed God, and therefore must needs be infinitely more Lovely and Charming, because the Object which doth so Affect ones Heart, Streams upon the Mind without *End*: So that when a Man employs his Thoughts upon the serious Contemplation of God's Nature, every View of its Glories is rewarded with Delight and Complacency; and this stirs him up to an eager Desire of making *farther* Discoveries; the Result whereof is, that the more he considers God's Nature, the more apt he is to Love him; and the more he loves God, the more desirous

desirous he is still to improve his Sense of God, and the more effectually he does it.

And this I take to be a great Reason, why many People who believe the Existence of God, have notwithstanding very cold and dull Apprehensions of him, because they do not Apply their Minds, as they should, to a serious and true Contemplation of his glorious Perfections; which (if they did) would Captivate their Affections to God, and consequently would make them Despise all other Thoughts in comparison of these Noble and Divine Considerations. People are generally govern'd by that which *St. Paul* calls *The Spirit of the World*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. meaning an Earthy Temper, which Clogs their Minds with the gross things of this present World; whereas, if they did send their Thoughts upwards, and imploy them upon viewing the Divine Nature, their Minds by degrees would be so Refined and Sublimated, that they would naturally be fixed upon God; than which, nothing can serve more to Improve their Sense of him.

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In order then to your Proficiency in this respect, let me advise you very frequently to possess your Hearts with such a serious Consideration of the charming Excellencies of the Divine Being, as will at once Attract your Affections, and Raise in your Mind such comfortable and delightful Apprehensions of the Beauties of it, as plainly shew, that God is Love; I mean, the Mirror and Spring of Love, and the Object of all Love too. To consider duly, How, out of his abundant and overflowing Benignity, he made the World, not for any Benefit or Advantage of his own, but to Communicate in some measure his Perfections to his Creatures, and to Display the Glories of his Nature, his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Righteousness, and the like: How he hath Adapted and Fitted the several Parts of the Creation after such an harmonious Manner, that they serve for the Wellfare of the Whole, and especially for the Good and Delight of all Mankind: How he Supports the Beings and Faculties of his Creatures for their respective Uses: How he filleth all things living with Plenteousness, giveth to all things that
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wait upon him, their proper Food in due Season, and sendeth his Rains upon the Just and Unjust too: How wonderfully he hath made *Us Men* in Secret, and curiously Wrought us, Day by Day having fashioned us after a most stupendous and unaccountable Manner: How he took us out of our Mothers Wombs, and hath been our Stay ever since we hanged upon our Mothers Breasts: How he still takes Care of us, whether Waking or Sleeping, whether at Home or Abroad, so that the very Hairs of our Heads are all numbred: And how we hourly live by the Bounty and Goodness of his Providence.

But more especially consider the wonderful Care he takes of those Precious and Immortal Souls of Ours, whereby he has distinguished us from all other Sublunary Creatures: How he has provided for our Souls an Eternity of Happiness in another World: How many Promises he hath given us to confirm our Expectations of it: How he has given us Laws to Purify our depraved Nature, and to Fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light: How easy he has made our Obedience
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to those Laws: How he gives us all his Holy Spirit to Assist and Quicken our Obedience, and to Comfort and Encourage us in the midst of all our Afflictions in this World: How he wisheth that none may Perish, but that all may come to Repentance: How he waiteth for our Repentance, that his Patience and Goodness and Long-suffering may at last Lead us to it: How he overlooks our Ignorances and Follies, and pittieth our Infirmities, as a Tender Father pittieth the Frailties of his Children: How he Receiveth, Pardoneth, and Rejoyceth over a Prodigal Son that is sincerely Penitent for his Evil Courses: How, for Reclaiming the Impenitent, he useth all the melting Methods of Grace and Goodness, which are fit to be used towards Rational Creatures and Voluntary Agents: How, in punishing the Obstinate, he Aims at their own Good, not willingly Afflicting or Grieving the Children of Men, but Chastning them for their Profit, that they may be Partakers of his Holiness: How, by his Severe and Terrible Judgments towards the Obdurate, he gives loud Warning to all others, that they may not bring themselves
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under the like Condemnation: How, when People consign themselves to Destruction, he gives them up to their voluntary Fate, with an holy kind of Reluctancy and Regret, as those Scripture Expressions argue, *Why will you Dye, O house of Israel?* Ezek. 18. 31. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?* Hof. 11. 8. *O that my People would have hearkened unto me,* Psalm 81. 13. And, *how often would I have gathered you together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not,* Matth. 23. 37.

Consider further yet, How Great God's Goodness is towards those who truly Fear and Love him: How he never Leaves or Forsakes them, but Careth daily for them; so that they want nothing that is *really* for their Good: How he Guides them with his Counsel, Protects them by his Providence, and gives his Angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways: How he delivers them out of their Troubles, and ordereth all things to work together for their Good: How he is with them in Trouble, and strengthens with Faith and his Holy Spirit to endure all things with Meekness, Patience, and Self-

Self-denial : How he hath prepared for them such good things as pass Man's Understanding ; such as Eye cannot yet see, nor Ear hear, nor can enter into the Heart of Man now to conceive : How he Comforts them on their Death-beds, and after Death will Receive them into those Heavenly Mansions, where the Lord Jesus has prepared suitable Places for them ; *there* to shew *Them* his Face, who now see only a Glimpse of his Glory ; *there* to Perfect all their Faculties, and to Bless them with a Similitude of his own Purity and Holiness ; *there* to entertain them with Abundant and Everlasting Emanations of his Goodness, to Beatify them with the ravishing Contemplation and Love of his Divine Majesty, and to replenish them with all the Pleasures which are at his Right Hand ; *there* to Delight them with the Society of Saints and Angels to Eternal Ages, to Crown them with the most blissful Enjoyment of Himself, and of Jesus Christ, whom he sent into the World to bring them to Happiness ; and *there* to Triumph with them in their Possession of Happiness and
Glory,

Glory, after all their Combats under the Sun, and upon their final Victories over Sin, Death, and Hell.

Did these Just Considerations enter into Honest and Good Hearts, they would naturally serve to Inflame us with the *Love* of God, and furnish our Minds with such Noble Conceptions of that Super-excellent Being, as would excite in us strong and eager Desires of looking still farther and farther into the Divine Nature, and consequently would help to Improve in our Souls a more and more delightful Sense of God.

If a man Love me, (saith our Saviour) he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him (that is, will Reveal and Manifest our selves to him) and make our Abode with him, (or, constantly encrease his Knowledge) John 14. 23.

2. *Secondly*, Another way to encrease our Sense of God, is to have *Modest* and *Humble* Thoughts of our own *Capacities*. There are in the World such Multitudes of things, and such Varieties of things, which fall under our daily Observation, and yet are hidden in the Dark as to the *Reasons* of them, that

that the Endeavours of the Acutest Philosophers in giving a plain and certain Account of them, must needs be unsuccessful, without resolving all into the Power and Pleasure of a most Blessed Deity. The constant, regular Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, tho' in different Lines, (or, if the Earth moves, 'tis the same thing to my present purpose) who can certainly and plainly Account for it? The Flowing and Ebbing of the Sea; the Tendency of Bodies towards the Center of the Earth; the Attractive Faculties of the Load-stone and Amber; the Production of Animals in their various, but constant Kinds, Shapes, and Sizes; the Formative Rudiments of a Child in the Womb; the Vibrations and Colour of that little Red Speck, called by Physicians, the *Punctum Saliens*; the Structure *thence* of the Bones, Membranes, Ligaments, Veins, Nerves, Muscles, and Bowels; the Muscular Motions of the Midriff; the Pulsations of the Heart, with its Auricles; the Stupendious Fabrication of the Brain; the Operations and Faculties of Humane Souls; the Common Notions which pass among the Generality of Mankind, touching
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Truth and Fallhood, Vice and Virtue, Right and VVrong, and innumerable Instances more of the Secrets of Nature; who is there among all the Tribes of Philosophers, that can give us a solid and immediate Reason of them, though they *acknowledge* the Superintendency of a Divine Being? Much less can Atheists, who talk foolishly of Blind Matter and its Necessary Motion without the Directions of a God, give us *one Fair* Reason of these things, which require Mathematical Demonstrations on *their* Side, to Confront the Universal Sentiments of Mankind, touching the Existence of a Maker of the World, and of all things in it. The true Reason of their Folly is bottom'd on their own Self-conceit and fond Imaginations, that because some few things can be salved by *Them* (as they are *Modestly* by *Us*) in the way of Mechanism, that is, by Matter and Motion, therefore *All* things in the World whatsoever are capable of being salved after the same manner; though it be the Enterprize and the End of those Men, to *Exclude* all Notions of *our* God.

Therefore, to improve our Apprehensions of that Glorious Being, we must consider what we are, *viz.* Creatures of narrow and limited Capacities; we find very sensibly that there are Millions of things which we know nothing at all of; and if we would fairly Balance the Account, we should find the Sum of what the wisest Men among us know, falls vastly short of those Particulars which are hid from them; and that their Knowledge (how great soever it be) bears no Proportion to their Ignorance. Now, the Sense of this will naturally lead us to improve in our Minds, not only humble Thoughts of our own Imperfections and Incapacities, but moreover greater and greater Apprehensions still of God's Adorable Perfections. For our Faculties having been given us by God, and those (though narrow) being such as make us able to Improve our Knowledge, to very great degrees, in all Points which are within our *Reach*, and are *Fit* for us to know; we must conclude that God's Knowledge is infinitely greater than ours *is*, or *can* be; He himself being Infinite and Absolute in all Perfections, whether Moral or Intellectual,

Intellectual: Upon which Account we ought always to submit our Understandings to Him in all things which he proposeth to our Belief; because we may be sure, that as He proposes nothing but what He knoweth to be True, so it would be inconsistent with his Veracity, Righteousness and Goodness, to deceive us, if the things were not True; the Sense of all which his Glorious Attributes will daily Increase in us, under the humble Sense of our own Poor and Finite Capacities.

At the Close of this Consideration, let me by all means advise you never to Trust to your own Capacities, so far as to deny the Existence of things, which possibly *may* be, and actually *are*, for ought you can know to the contrary: As to say, that there is *No* such Thing as an Immortal Soul; *No* such Being as an Immortal Substance; *No* such Place as Hell; *No* such State as a State of Misery in another World. All these are only bold Negatives, and without Proof too: And, as it is very hard in many Cases to prove a Negative, so in this Case 'tis utterly impossible; because a Man that goes about to prove it, must suppose, that all things which

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are in this World, and in another too, are within the Compass of his own Understanding. For, before he can be sure in his own Mind, that whatsoever is not within his own Knowledge, is not in Being, he must be sure, that whatsoever is in Being, is within his Knowledge; which is the greatest Vanity in the World for any Man to imagine, and absolutely impossible for any Man to make out. I am sure, that the most Safe, the most Rational, and the most Christian Way, is for every Man to think of himself, *not more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man his measure.* This will be a ready way to help them to grow daily more and more in the Knowledge of God, if they are desirous or willing to entertain that Knowledge. But, not to stay any longer upon this Point;

3. A *Third* way of Encreasing our Sense of God, is, *to follow that Holiness, without which we shall not see him.* By Holiness, I mean a Purity of Mind from the love of all manner of Immorality, as far as our poor Infirm Nature

ture is capable of it. *Blessed are the pure in heart*, (saith our Blessed Saviour) *for they shall see God*, Matth. 5. meaning, That they shall have a true Knowledge of God in this Life, and a Beatifical Vision of him in the next. Now, vain Men (especially such as slight Christ's Religion) may look upon these Expressions, as so many Empty and Canting Words; but in truth they carry with them a great deal of Gravity and Moment, did we seriously consider the natural Influence which Vice and Virtue cast upon ones Mind; *That*, to stifle all due Notions of a Just Deity; and *This*, to improve them. For on the one Hand: 1. *First*, People of debauch'd Lives must naturally Abhor and Hate all Thoughts of a Righteous God; because the Prospect of such a Being, directly and naturally serves to give their Lusts a Stab: For which reason, Men are never Proficients in Atheism, before they are Profligate in their Manners. *Secondly*, It is certain, That Mens corrupt Inclinations do naturally *Indispose* them to entertain a true Sense of God, though we suppose them to have some *Thoughts* of him. For vicious Affections have such a

Power over the Understanding, that they always make ones Judgment partial; so that the Determination is made, not as things are True or False, Right or Wrong, but as they are most Agreeable, and most Serviceable to the Man's Lusts, who is fond of them. Upon this account it is impossible for one of an evil Temper to have a true Sense of God (much less is it possible for him to improve that Sense) because his Judgment is always biased by his Vices, which make him a Party against God, Divine Vengeance continually staring upon his Conscience.

On the other Hand, Holiness of Heart does naturally serve to Improve ones Apprehensions of God; because God is every day in such a Man's Thoughts, and the Contemplation of God's Glorious Nature and Attributes is the Pleasure and Delight of an Holy Person's Mind. And, besides, he takes care to Govern himself so in the Fear of God, that his Thoughts of God are not diverted, nor his Knowledge of God obstructed, by those Prejudices, Passions and sinful Lusts, which serve to Darken the Minds of vicious Men,
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like Fogs in a bad Air, which intercept the Light of the Sun.

To which we must add, what the Holy Scripture tells us, That, *as to the Meek* (or the Religious) *God will Teach them his way,* (or Instruct them in the Truth) *Psal. 25. 9.* And again; That *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,* Ver. 14. For though we must not pretend to any immediate Revelations, or to any miraculous Operations of the Holy Ghost, which the first Ages of Christianity were so Renowned for; yet it is not to be questioned, but God's Spirit doth still Assist all Men of Pious and Faithful Hearts, and will assist such to the End of the World by his ordinary Influences, but after a more especial manner, so as to Bless their Studies and Labours, and to render their Endeavours, for the true Knowledge of God, successful: Of which Influences none are so capable as those whose Minds are cleansed from those Moral Impurities which have made so many People among us Lewd and Scandalous, and by degrees have infected them even with *Principles Atheistical.*

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Therefore, that we may *Grow in Grace*, and in the *True Sense and Knowledge of God*, it is absolutely necessary for us to clear our Minds of all vicious Inclinations, as much as we can by our most earnest Endeavours. In order to which End you should make it your Care, instantly and utterly to Abandon such Vices, as directly tend to draw Off your Minds from God, and to draw On many other Vices of the same Tendency. As, *First*, to throw aside all *Inordinate Love* of the things of this present Life; a Vice which Clogs the Mind with Dirt and Clay, and Mireth it so in the Cares of this World, that it stifles all due Considerations of *God's* Care, and Goodness, and Providence over all his Creatures, as well as all due Notions of *Mercy* and *Justice* towards one another; private Interest being the whole and only Rule, by which the Men of this World Measure and Govern their Actions, without regard to the Laws of God or Conscience. *Secondly*, 'Tis necessary to forbear *Intemperance*, a Vice, which immediately tends to disturb our natural Faculties, so as to make them unfit for our Improvement in any Science, and especially

cially in the Sense of God, unless it be in the Sense of his Vindictive *Justice*. *Thirdly*, To Abstain from all *unlawful Lusts of the Flesh*; for those vicious Impurities have a natural Tendency to Drown the Mind into a State of Sensuality, to Alienate it from God (as they turned away the Heart of *Solomon* himself) and by degrees to produce that Insensibility, which the Holy Scripture calls a *Reprobate Mind*, and which *Arrian* the Philosopher calls *απολίθωσις*, meaning a Petrifying of the Soul, and Hardening of it, as it were into a flinty Temper. *Fourthly*, and above all, learn to bear in your Selves more and more a *Resemblance* of those Perfections of God which are called his Moral Perfections; such as his Goodness and Benignity, his Justice and Righteousness, his Patience, Charity, Compassion, and universal Love. This is to have a true Practical Sense of God; nay, the most Excellent and most Comfortable Sense of him; when by viewing the Glories of his Nature, we are so affected with the Sense of them, as that we Communicate of those his Divine Perfections, which are communicable to us. This
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the Scripture calls, a *Partaking of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. And by this Participation we come to have the very best Sense of God; because all Divine Speculations are in order to it, so that our Knowledge of God without it will signify nothing, unless it be to our greater Condemnation. When our Saviour told his Disciples, *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also*; and Philip replied, *Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us*; our Saviour said, *have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. Where the meaning of Christ was, not that he had shewed them the very Person or Essence of his Father, (for that was Invisibile and Incomprehensible) but that by his Works and Actions he had exprest to them the Moral Perfections of his Father, his Beneficence, Kindness, Clemency, Love of Souls, and the like: For those Gracious and Tender Inclinations which were in our Saviour himself, they might be sure were in his Father also; which I take to be the meaning of those following Words, *I am in the Father,*

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Father, and the Father in me; because the same Goodness of Nature is in both; so that by seeing the Virtues of the *One*, they saw, in Him, the Perfections of the *Other* also; their Nature and Goodness being the very same. Now, as those Disciples might have known and seen the Father in Christ, by that Divine Nature which was (*Essentially*) in Christ; so may every good Christian know and see God in *Himself*, by being sensible of those Divine Graces which are (*Derivatively*) in Him. This is a true Sense of God indeed, when by the Communication of Divine Graces he, as it were, feels God in his Heart and Soul; and the more he encreaseth in those Perfections, the more Sense of God he must needs have still; and therefore we must be careful to follow Holiness, without which, *it is impossible to see God*; no, not with that *Imperfect* Vision which this Life is blest with.

4. *Fourthly*, Another way of Improving a Sense of God, is, to gather *Pious Meditations from the Works of God*. By the Works of God I mean here partly the Work of Creation; under which I com-

I comprehend the Conservation of the World in general, and partly the Work of the Redemption of Mankind in particular.

First, As to the Work of Creation, God hath not left himself without Witness, *in that he doth Good, and gives us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness,* saith the Apostle, Acts 14. 17. And again, Rom. 1. 20. the invisible things of God, from (or, ever since) the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead. Though God's Nature or Essence be Invisible, yet his Existence and Attributes belonging thereunto, are easily discoverable by the Marks and Signatures of his Divine Hand, which he left upon his Works in this visible World. As for instance: His Divine Power is naturally discoverable by the vast *Variety* of his Creatures: His Divine Providence and Care of all is discoverable by the *Regularity* of his Creatures: His Divine Goodness is discoverable by the *Usefulness* of his Creatures: And his Divine Wisdom is naturally discoverable by

by the *Correspondency* of his Creatures to each other. To exemplify this Matter a little :

1. If you observe the astonishing *Variety* of his Creatures, you must needs be sensible, that it could be no less than an Omnipotent *Power* which made them; and the more you observe this Variety, the more ravishing Sense you will still have of that Power. Observe that Immense Firmament which doth encompass this spacious Frame of Nature; those glorious Luminaries, the Sun and Moon, and an infinite number of other Stars which are in the Firmament; that Airy Expansion which is below it, with thousands of sorts of Insects, and other winged Creatures, which are its Inhabitants; the Seas and Rivers that are every where replenished with an endless variety of Fishes; the vast Treasures of Riches which are in the Bowels of the Earth; the inexpressible Variety of Vegetative and Sensitive Creatures which are on its Surface, besides the unaccountable Numbers of rational Animals; and what can you gather from these Observations, but the like Devout Meditations
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and Transporting Sense of an All-powerful God, which was in the Holy Psalmist, when he composed the 104th Psalm? A place of Scripture very fit for your daily Reading, and Pious Thoughts.

2. Observe the fixt and constant *Regularity* which is throughout the whole Frame of Nature; how all things continue in the same admirable Order they were put into at the first, and under the same Law that was given them in the Beginning, about Six thousand Years ago, without Decay, Interruption, or Disturbance; the same Aspects, Distances, and Courses of the Heavenly Bodies; the same Salutary Motions, Influences, and Breaths of Air; the same *Species* of Plants, Trees, and Animals of all sorts, notwithstanding the Infinite Destruction of *Individuals*, their Predecessors and Parents; the same Operations of all seminal Principles; the same Germinations and Productions; the same Propagations of Male and Female; and, in short, the yearly, plentiful Provision, which hath been ever, and all along made for the Preservation of Man and Beast: And how can this chuse but encrease in you a Rational
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and Pious Sense of God's continual provident Care, and strike your Heart more and more with a grateful Acknowledgment, that He is an Universal Parent and Providetore, that daily expresseth a tender Regard for every Creature in particular, and for the Good of the whole Creation in general: For without this Care, it is impossible for you with Reason to conceive how this wonderful Fabrick of such various Powers could have held together, during such a vast Tract of Ages, in such an harmonious, orderly, and constant Manner, considering the multifarious Mutations and Changes, which otherwise must have been, and the gross Errors and Bunglings which blind Nature must have been Guilty of perpetually, without the careful Directions and Government of a provident Hand over the Creation.

3. Observe the Stupendious *Usefulness* that is in the several Parts of the Creation. Of this you have a General and Short, but Elegant Account in Hosea 2. 21, 22. *I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth; and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oyl,*
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and they shall hear Jezreel. Which Expressions, not only signify the daily *Wants* of Creatures in this Sublunary World, which, as it were, cry aloud unto God to supply them; but moreover, shew the *Subserviency* which one Creature ministreth to another, and the Dependence which one Creature hath upon another, and All upon God. By his Providence the Heavens drop down their Fatness on the Earth; the Earth communicates these Fertilizing Irrigations to the Roots of all Vegetables; those Vegetables grow and fructify thereby; and so there is a daily Maintenance for Man, and for all living Creatures which have a Dependence upon Man, and are for the Use and Service of Man. Should we examine Particulars, it would be an endless thing to observe how useful one Part of the Creation is to another, and every one to the whole; and therefore I shall forbear that Speculation now; especially considering the notice I have taken of it in a former Discourse, *Concerning the Existence of God.* Thus much in short, we may very well conclude on; that there is no Particle of the Creation, but what is useful in its kind. For
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though the particular Uses of many things are not yet discovered, yet we must not by any means thence infer, that they have not a natural Tendency to good Purposes, because the Usefulness of many things hath been found out in these latter Ages, which was not understood in former Times; and our inquisitive Posterity will Discover the usefulness of divers Works in Nature, which we know Nothing, or very Little of to this Day; not that there is a natural Imperfection in any Creatures, which makes their Usefulness escape the strictest View; but because we have not yet applied our Minds to Contemplations of so Nice a Nature, though others after us may, and will.

Now, this Observation will help to raise in your Mind a very lively Sense of the Extensive Benignity of the Divine Nature, or, that Beneficent Inclination and Propension that is in God's Will, whereby He consults the Good of all his Creatures, and ordereth each Creature to be an Instrument of Benefit and Advantage to its Fellow-Creatures, according to their several Stations, Conditions and Capacities. For, what
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but Divine Goodness could cause the Heavenly Bodies to cast that Light and Heat into the Lower World, without which it were impossible for any Living Thing to enjoy Comfort or Subsistence? What but Divine Goodness could contrive that subtil Pellucid, and Rared Element, the Air, for a proper Medium to transmit the heavenly Influences to things here below, and to assist those Influences with seasonable Rains and Dews? What but Divine Goodness could order the Natures of all Vegetables so, as that by means of those Distillations they grow and yield their Encrease for the Good of Man and Beast, to Minister their Food, to relieve their Wants, to strengthen their Spirits, to sustain their Health, to prolong their Days, and to cure those Maladies which are incident to their frail and weakly Constitutions? O Blessed God! that any Men should be so forsaken of Common Reason, as to ascribe all these harmonious Advantages, and admirable orderly Conveniences to the casual Jumps of stupid Matter, that of its self is utterly destitute of Motion, Life, Sense, Deliberation and Counsel; that
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hath nothing of Morality in it; no natural Tendency to any manner of Good; no Design, or the least innate Capacity of doing Good; no Faculty that way; but ~~is~~ a meer dead and passive Thing, without the Hand and Operations of a most Beneficent Being, whose Mercy is over all his Works, and who *openeth his hand daily to fill all things living with Plenteousness!* No, no, this noble Usefulness of all Creatures is an apparent Argument of the Infinite Goodness of a most Gracious and Provident God; so that you cannot walk in the Fields, or step into your Gardens, or turn your Eyes to any part of this visible World, but (if you Consider and Meditate well) you must be struck with an amazing Sense of the stupendious Benignity of the Divine Nature, and be excited thereby to Adore and Glorify the Powerful Father of all Things. Oh! that Men would therefore Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the wonderful Works that he doth for the Children of Men, as the Devout Psalmist reiterateth his Exhortation upon this Subject, *Psalm 107.*

4. Observe how all Creatures are *Prepared*, *Adapted*, and *Fitted* for those good Ends, which the Provident God hath of his great Goodness designed them for, &c. This will help to affect your Minds with a lively Sense of the wonderful *Wisdom* of God also. In all the regular Contrivances of Men there is, in the Contriver's Mind, a Model and Platform, first of the *End* which he proposeth to himself, and then of the *Means* which he thinks proper and suitable to Answer his intended Purpose; and when a beneficial End is determined on, and fit Means are used to bring that End to due Effect, it is a plain Argument of Understanding, Skill, Dexterity and Wisdom in the Projector. As, when we see a Magnificent and Commodious House, 'tis a manifest Sign that the Stones, Timbers, and other Materials, did not by meer Accident leap together into that Artificial Fabrick; nor that Saws, Axes, and Hammers did of their own accord set themselves on Work, or Conspire to the Erecting of so convenient a Structure; but that it was contrived by a very Knowing Artist, who first formed the Idea of the whole

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in his Mind, and afterwards adapted and fitted the several Parts after a wise Manner for their respective Uses, and for the Good of the Inhabitants. The Building it self, without the help of much Reasoning, is an undeniable Argument of an Understanding Mind; and should a Disciple of *Epicurus*, or *Lucretius*, come to salve the Account of it, with his Grave Philosophick Lecture of unguided Atoms, he would need no Answer but Laughter and Ridicule. Now, to Apply this familiar Consideration: When we behold this most Magnificent and Useful Fabrick, the Universe, and observe the Artificial Correspondence which is in the whole Creation; how wonderfully suitable one thing is to another; and amidst that vast variety of Creatures (as well Species as Individuals) in this spacious World, how every Creature is adapted and fitted in its Structure for its proper Station, for its own Good, and for the Good of the whole; it must needs be a very affecting Argument of the Infinite Wisdom of a Good God, who before he made the World had a perfect and beautiful Idea of all things in his own Mind; and in the Formation of

the World did Suit and Fit, after a most wise manner, the several Parts of it one to another, so, as (supposing a Wise Being to have been the Author of all things) nothing could become his Wisdom more than the admirable Suitableness that is amongst those manifold Beings, which make up the whole Chorus of the Creation. To illustrate this Speculation a little by some familiar Instances, which are obvious Testimonies of Divine Wisdom, though they be not duly considered by many unwise People: How admirably fitted is that thin Element, the Air, for the Flights of Birds, and for the Respiration of all sorts of Animals? The Waters, for the nimble Motion of Fishes? And the Solid Earth, for other Sensitive Creatures, to Creep, Walk, Sport and Enjoy themselves, and one another upon? Again, besides the Suitableness of their Habitations to these various Kinds of Animals, how admirably are they themselves fitted, in their Frame and Contexture, to their respective Habitations: So that were they to shift their Mansions, it would be impossible for them to live out of those their proper Elements, which the most Wise God had assigned

signed them? Again, as the Common Dwellings of all these sorts of Creatures are fitted for them, and they fitted for their Common Dwellings; so are all their Parts and proper Structures admirably adapted and fitted to those particular Uses and Functions which their Natures are designed for. Begin your Observations with Mankind; go on to the Beasts of the Field, to the Fowls of the Air, to the Fishes of the Sea; and then proceed to every Insect and Fly, down to the very poor despised Worm; and you will find to your great Admiration, that as Men are especially endued with Intellectual and Moral Faculties, which are proper and fit for Rational Beings; so are all other Animals admirably endued with Parts, Powers and Faculties, fit for their proper Motions and Sensations, as well as for the Preservation of their Lives, and the Propagation of their Species when their own Lives are at an end: All which plainly shews the wonderful Wisdom of their Creator. Again, how admirably are the Appetites of all Animals fitted for the proper *Nutrimment*, which is provided for them in their several Apartments, and their Nutrimment fitted to their Appetites?

Thus, for instance, Fruits, Flies, and a world of Insects, are provided for the Fowls of the Air in their Apartment, and their Appetites are fitted for them; Worms, and various other things, are provided for the Fishes of the Sea, in their Apartment, and their Appetites for them; Infinite numbers of Vegetables are provided for the Beasts of the Field in their Apartment, and their Appetites for them; and all these Creatures are provided for the Use and Service of Man, who has a general Appetite fitted for them all: So that 'tis as impossible for any Animals, in what Region so ever they are placed, to subsist without that proper Food which is provided for them there, as it would be for Men to Drown themselves in Rivers, and there to Live upon Mud. Go hence in your Observations to those Creatures which Grow upon the Surface of the Earth, and are indued with Life only, (or, an inward Principle of Action) as Trees, Shrubs, and innumerable sorts of Plants; how admirably are their Mother-Seeds, with their several Cicatricels and Germens fitted and adapted for the Production of their respective Kinds? How congruously doth

doth the Germen issue forth the Roots into the Earth, for the support of the future Vegetable, which is yet an Embryo? How admirably fitted are the Roots to convey through their porous Fibres the Vital Juices of the Earth to the young upper Sprout? How admirably fitted is that Sprout to raise it self to a great Height, and a due Magnitude, and to transmit the spirituous Particles into their proper Receptacles; some into Leaves, some into Fruit and Seeds, and some into Rinde and Bark, to defend the whole Off-spring from the ordinary Injuries of the Weather? These things, as to Matter of Fact, are undeniable; and the Consideration of them, should, one would think, raise in all Peoples Minds a very lively Sense of the adorable Wisdom of a most Gracious and Good God, who before the Creation had in his own Divine Mind a most perfect Idea of the Correspondency or Suitableness of one thing to another; and accordingly did, by his Omnipotent Art, after the most commodious Manner, adapt, suit and fit one thing to another, for the Good of every Creature: And I appeal to the common Reason of Mankind, whether

ther any Fortune, Chance, or Blind Matter, or any thing but Divine Wisdom, could have ordered all these Fittnesses, besides abundance more, which for brevity sake I have not instanced in.

I am sure, that the old considerate Heathen Philosophers were induced, by these, and the like sensible Observations, to acknowledge the Existence of a Divine Mind (or God) over all things. Indeed those Philosophers (especially the *Pythagoreans*, *Platonists*, and some of the *Stoicks*) had so great a Sense of God's Majesty, that they did not only own him, as the Maker, King and Father of all things, and the best of all Beings; (as they express themselves) but moreover in their Actions address themselves Solemnly to him with Praises and Prayers on all occasions, and testified their Readiness to Submit to his Pleasure and Providence, as to a most Powerful, Careful, Beneficent, and Wise Governor of the World. And yet those Men, while Paganism prevailed, had none but the Book of Nature, and their own natural Consciences to look into, and to be instructed by. The Important Truths of a Mediator between

tween God and Man, Jesus Christ, and of the Redemption of Mankind by him, were Mysteries which those Sages were Strangers to. Had those Mysteries been Unfolded to them, (as they have been Revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures) there is no reason to doubt, but that they, who made such an excellent Use of their Natural Observations, would have been posselt with a much more Divine Sense of the Existence and Perfections of God, by the further help of Divine Revelation: Witness the Zeal of those Philosophers, who in the times of Christianity were converted to the Christian Faith, Defended it in their Apologies and Disputations with the Pagans, and at last chearfully died glorious Martyrs for it.

Secondly, Now this brings me to the next Point, to shew how we may improve a lively Sense of God, by gathering further Pious Meditations from the Work of the *Redemption* of the World, which God was pleased to accomplish by his Eternal Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifested in the Flesh.

And here I suppose my self to speak to such Religious People, as own the
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Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures; because it is in vain to speak of the Redemption of Mankind, to those who are taught by *Epicurus*, *Lucretius*, and others, to deny the Divine Creation of the World; or to talk of the Divine Perfections discover'd by the Son of God's saving an undone World, to those who do not acknowledge the Being of a Living God.

Here then are three things chiefly, which the Scripture Account of our Redemption offers to all pious Minds, for the Improvement of their Sense of God: (1.) *First*, The *Condescension*. (2.) *Secondly*, The *Justice*. (3.) *Thirdly*, The suitable *Method* of God in order to this great Work, and the wonderful *Temperament* of the Justice and Goodness of God in this his Dispensation towards the Children of Men.

(1.) And, *First*, let us consider the great *Condescension* of God in the Work of Redemption. Upon the Apostacy of our First Parents, and that too in a Case, wherein it was so easy for them to have obey'd the Will and Pleasure of their Creator, and wherein also the
Dignity

Dignity and Authority of their Creator was so much concerned ; it had been consistent with the Rule of Justice, to have deprived them of all the glorious Ends, for which they had been created ; and not them themselves only, but their Posterity also, which being a Part of themselves, ought in Justice to be bound up by the Act of their Parents. But instead of providing against them after a Severe, Strict, and Rigid (though Just) Course, God was pleas'd to pitch upon a Method, to Reconcile those Essential Attributes of the Deity, Mercy, and Justice, so as that the World might see it could come from no Original, but the Infinite Compassion, Pity, and Goodness, which is in the Divine Nature. 1. *First*, He admitted the Intercession of his Eternal Son, to make an Atonement for Sin, by undertaking to Offer up himself (at a proper time) a Sacrifice for all Mankind, and to restore them to his Favour, upon certain Terms and Conditions consistent with his Honour and Authority. This was purely an Act of Grace and Tenderness. 2. God was pleased, when the Fulness of Time was come, to send his Son (our Blessed Mediator)

diator) into the World, to Publish the Terms of this Covenant, and to Act with Authority between God and Man, that the Conditions of the Covenant might be duly performed on each hand. 3. God was pleased (of his own Infinite Goodness) to promise Infinite Reconciliation on his Part, upon our Performance of those Conditions. 4. Though in Point of Justice God might have insisted upon very rigorous Terms, yet he was pleased to propose to Mankind, by his Son, such Terms as are Practicable, Rational, and Easy; as the abandoning of Ungodliness and Immorality, Faith in our Mediator thus authorized by his Father, and hearty Obedience to God's Laws for the future. 5. To render our Disobedience inexcusable, and therefore liable to extream Punishment, God was pleased to give us such Laws, as are not only suitable to our Nature, but moreover, (as I hope to shew you hereafter) such as are for our *Present* Good, Happiness, and Comfort in the Observation of them, as well as for our Felicity in a Future State. 6. To encourage and facilitate our Obedience to his Laws, God was pleased yet further
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to afford us the super-natural Assistance of his Holy and Divine Spirit. And, *Lastly*, God was pleased, upon our Co-operating with the help of his Spirit, to promise the full Pardon of our past Sins in this World, and Eternal Happiness in another, if we persevere in well-doing to the end of our Lives. Oh! What great Condescension was this, in that Divine and Sovereign Being, who is the Absolute Lord and Disposer of all things? And, how can any Pious Heart be entertained with this Meditation, without being inflamed with the Love of God, or without passionate Desires of expressing all possible Adoration and Obedience to a Being, so infinitely Gracious, Kind, and Merciful to his sinful Creatures?

(2.) The Work of our Redemption shews the great *Justice* of God, for the further improving a lively Sense of him. By that Justice of God, I mean here, not only in general the Universal Rectitude of the Divine Nature; but in particular, that his Essential Perfection, which Inclines, Moves, and Excites him, (I speak after the manner of Men) or, which in some sense, and
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respect, obligeth God to inflict Punishment upon Men for having violated his most Sacred Laws, and thereby trampled under foot his Divine Authority and Honour. This is *Punitive Justice*, grounded upon God's just Displeasure, Hatred, Indignation, and Vengeance against all Impious and Immoral Courses, which are infinite Injuries to his Laws and Honour, and are therefore Meritorious of Condign Punishment. Now this Justice is most remarkably shewed (whatever the *Socinians* pretend) when he *delivered up his Son for us All*, Rom. 8. 32. So that *his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. meaning, that he endured the Punishment of our Sins. That this is the Sense of that Phrase, appears from Ezek. 18. where 'tis said, That *the Son shall not bare the iniquity of his Father*, that is, shall not be punished for it. Nor can any thing seem more clear, than that when the Lord Jesus suffered upon the Cross, he suffered in our Room and Stead, as our Substitute and Proxy, to make God Amends, Compensation, and Satisfaction for all the past Crimes of Mankind; as well as to debar them from the Commission

Commission of those, and the like Crimes, for the future. Nor can we make any other Natural or Tolerable Construction of those Words of the Prophet, *Isaiah 53.* where speaking of the Death of our Blessed Mediator as a thing past, because in futurity, *Certain,* says he, that *he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows;*—that *he was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our Iniquities;*—that *the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him;*—that *with his Stripes we are healed;*—and that *the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us All.* What other fair Sense can be reasonably made of all these Expressions, but that God inflicted on Jesus Christ the Punishment that was due to Mankind for their Iniquities past; that Jesus Christ underwent the Punishment; that he was punished, as our Mediator, in our place, by an Exchange of Persons agreed upon before-hand between his Father and Him; and that by undergoing this Punishment according to Agreement, he made full Satisfaction to his Father's Justice for the Sins of the whole World.

See now, how this Consideration serves to improve in our Minds a lively
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and religious Sense of God, if it be entertained in honest and good Hearts. As the Sense of those other Attributes of God, which have been already mentioned, is naturally apt to work upon our other Affections, so is the Sense of his great Justice apt to work upon this of Fear. To spare ones own Son for his Personal Demerits, is Natural, and an Act of Humane Tenderneſs: And if God (the great Mirror of Compaſſion and Tenderneſs) ſpared not his own Son, (though he was the Eternal Son of his Love, and our Substitute only, in whom there was no Guile) what can we Criminals expect at the Hand of a Juſt God, if we are not led by it to true Repentance? God's Severity towards Chriſt for the Sins of the World, if we conſider the Innocence of Himſelf, and his whole Paſſion in Body and Soul too, was the moſt dreadful Sight that ever was on Earth, and the moſt terrible Warning from Heaven that we ſhould Sin no more. But if, after all that diſmal Solemnity of Wrath and Vengeance, People will be ſo hardy ſtill, as to purſue their Evil Courſes after a perverſe and deſperate Manner, and in Deſiance of God's Juſtice,

stice, they should consider sadly what the Apostle tells us, Heb. 10. 26. *There remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin.* No New Mediator can be looked for hereafter: No New Expiation and Atonement is to be expected: No New Covenant any more to be sealed: No New Terms of Reconciliation to be propounded: And consequently No Mercy to be hoped for by such incorrigible Wretches, who now trample under foot the Blood of the Son of God. Nothing remaineth for such, but a *certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation.*

(3.) The Work of our Redemption gives such a complicated Sense of the Wisdom, Benignity, and Justice of God, as is apt to raise in our Minds the highest Admiration, and that in two Instances especially, not to mention any more.

1. In *Preparing* for the Great Work by the *Incarnation* of his Eternal Son, and by the stupendious *Union* of his Divine and Humane Natures in one *Person*. The Sins of the World being to be satisfied for by Christ's Death upon the Cross, according to the Antecedent Original Covenant between his Father

and Him; it was necessary for the *Word* (that is, the Second Person in the most Glorious Trinity) *to be made Flesh*, or to take upon him Humane Nature; because his Divine Nature was utterly uncapable of suffering Death, or any of those common Miseries and Punishments which Men are subject unto. Therefore, that he might Suffer to the utmost, God of his Goodness and Wisdom contrived it so, that he was made Man, in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted. Again, that his Death upon the Cross might be a *valuable* Compensation to the Divine Justice, a Full, Perfect, and Sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; it was requisite for the Divine Nature to be united to his Humanity in one Person, that the Transcendent Dignity of his Person might make all his Sufferings an Equivalent, so that by the Intrinsic Worth and Value of the Sacrifice, a Plenary Atonement might be tendered by the Son, and accepted by the Father, pursuant to the Terms of that Covenant, which had been stipulated between them upon the Fall of our First Parents. This admirable Method of putting
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ting Mankind into a salvable Condition, highly became the Infinite and Unsearchable Wisdom of God ; nor could any but his own Divine Wisdom have formed it in Order to the World's Redemption.

2. The Redemption *it self* shews the stupendious *Temperament* of his Justice and Mercy, together with his Wisdom. His *Justice*, in exacting Satisfaction for the most horrible Affronts and Injuries done to the Holiness of his Nature, to the Honour of his Majesty, and to the Authority of his Laws. His *Mercy* appears in divers Particulars. 1. In *Receiving* that Satisfaction at the Hands of his Son, who had undertaken voluntarily to Dye, and offer Satisfaction by his Death, in Permutation for the Lives and Souls of all Mankind. 2. In *Sealing* by the Blood of our Blessed Mediator, such a New Covenant, as that we might be Eternally Happy, if we would be merciful to our own Souls. 3. In proposing to us such fair, easy, and rational Conditions, in order to our Happiness, as Faith in Jesus Christ, Repentance from all those Vices which are a Dishonour to God,

and a Reproach even to our own Humane Nature; and in requiring such hearty and uniform Obedience to his Laws for the future, as we should be well able to perform. 4. In Promising the Supernatural Assistance of his Divine Spirit, for the performance of that Obedience, that no Man might pretend his own utter Inability. In all this there was such an admirable Mixture of Righteousness and Goodness, as none could have thought of, but a most Wise, Just, and Gracious Being, to salve his Honour, as to what was past, and to preserve his Authority for the time to come. Indeed some are apt to think, that God might have saved the World some other way, by the Prerogative of his Power and Goodness. But in this case we are to consider, not what *could* have been done, but what was most *proper* to have been done; and it is confessed, That this was the wisest and most *fittin*g Method for God to use. For had no terrible Marks of Displeasure against Wickednesses been shown, the World would have been emboldened to have gone on still in their Ungodly Courses, in Confidence of Impunity, than which nothing doth

doth more hearten wicked Wretches. On the other hand, had no Mercy been mixed with Justice, no Encouragement or Hopes could have been given to True Penitents. So that to answer the great Ends of God's Goodness to Mankind; to save his Justice from Reproach, and to save his Government from Contempt, and by these Means to save the Souls of Men too, this Temperament cannot but be consider'd by all pious Hearts with the highest Admiration.

And can any thing serve more to improve in your Mind a true Religious Sense of God, than this, That he is (as the Scripture tells us) the only Potentate, and the only wise Being? That he is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works; and that he is Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and that will by no means clear the Guilty: Did the Sense of all things work kindly upon Peoples Hearts, how could it chuse but awaken them out of a State of Security, and stir them up to serve God with *Reverence and godly Fear*, and to *work out their Salvation with fear and*

trembling? How could it chuse but possess them with terrible Apprehensions, as long as they persisted in an Evil Course of Life? How could it chuse but lead them to Repentance, considering the Riches of God's Goodness and Forbearance, and Long-suffering? How could it chuse, but kindle in their Hearts the true Love of God; and fill them with Faith and Hopes in the Mercy of God, upon the serious and timely Reformation of their Hearts and Lives? And how could it chuse but provoke them to entire and hearty Obedience to all the Laws of God? No, 'tis the want of a due Sense of God that makes some so scandalously Immoral; others so Prophane; others so Supine, Careless, and Negligent; and others so very Lukewarm in Matters of Religion; as if God were the least considerable thing in the World, though they profess a Belief in him. But not to stay any longer upon this Point.

5. *Fifthly*, Another way of Improving and Encreasing a Religious Sense of God, is to addict our selves to a strict and constant Course of *Devotion*. By which I mean, not a meer outward *Appear-
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ing at the Solemnity of Religion; for though this carries with it a fair Face, yet it may be nothing but an External Show, or a Civility paid to Custom, and to the Authority of our Governors; a Compliment that is very consistent with Vice and Irreligion, and with Infidelity it self. And to this purpose I have read of *Epicurus*, that though he vended Principles which naturally destroyed all Notions of a Provident Deity, and was an Atheist in his Heart; yet to comply with the Mode of the Times, and to avoid Popular Odium, and a scandalous Character, he was wont to *Appear* at the Religious Solemnities which were then in use, reserving to himself the Freedom of his Atheistical Thoughts and Opinions. But by a strict and constant Course of Devotion, I mean, a *Regular Zeal*, to Worship God with all ones Heart, Soul, and Mind; especially in the Publick Offices of Religion; such as Devout Prayers, Hearing of God's Word, and Receiving the Blessed Sacrament. For though Private Meditations, and Family Devotions, and Instructions, are very useful and necessary, to improve in our own Minds, and

and in the Minds of others, a Sense of God; yet the Publick Solemnities of Religion are most Excellent and Profitable, because *there* is nothing wanting that can serve to excite our Religious Thoughts. *There* we are put in mind of all the Glorious Perfections and Excellencies of God's Nature, which in this Finite, Poor, Mortal State of ours, 'tis possible for us to know in some measure. *There* is suggested to us, God's Unity, Immortality, Immutability, absolute Holiness, Omnipresence, and other Incommunicable Glories of his Essence, which most deservedly call for our profound Adoration of his Divine Majesty. Again, in our Sacred Assemblies we are duly informed of God's *Intellectual* Perfections; as his infinite Knowledge, whereby he Understands all things, not only the fixt Natures of all his Creatures, but even all future and possible Contingencies, which depend upon the Liberty of Mens Wills: Likewise his great Wisdom, whereby he fits the properest Means in order to gracious and noble Ends: Nay, his universal Inspection over all his Works, whereby he taketh such a particular Care of every Creature, that not so
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much as a Sparrow can fall to the Ground without his Providence. Moreover, in our Religious Assemblies we hear elaborate Discourses of God's *Moral* Perfections, whereby he governs his Actions towards the Children of Men; his Eternal Righteousness, Veracity, Faithfulness, Love, Goodness, Patience, and Mercy, towards the worst of Men; causing his Sun to shine upon the Evil as well as the Good, and sending his Rains upon the Just, and the Unjust also. Again, in our Sacred Assemblies we are told of God's absolute Dominion over all his Creatures; of his unlimited Power; of the ineffable Glories he has prepared for those that Fear and Love him; and of that Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, which is treasured up for every worker of Iniquity. Further yet, in our Religious Solemnities our Minds are most apt to be Serious; our foolish Passions most apt to be Calm; our Hearts most apt to be Influenced and Wrought upon by Religious Meditations; our Souls most apt to be Affected with the Prayers and Praises of the Congregation; and our Devotions most apt to be Enflamed by the Concurrent Zeal and

Piety

Piety of our Fellow-Christians. In short, the Sense of God at such times is so apt to be lively, brisk, and comfortable, that the Holy Psalmist professeth, *That one day in the Lord's Courts was better then a thousand.*

On the other hand; To Absent our selves from our Solemn Assemblies, or to Demean our selves coldly and superficially in them, is the ready way to estrange our selves from God; to Indulge our selves in Supineness, Ignorance, and Incogitancy; to lay our Thoughts of God asleep, and as it were dead; by which means the Sense of God will by degrees wear off, instead of being improv'd; Vice, and Lust, and all manner of Immorality will succeed in the room of it; till the neglect of God's Publick Ordinances and Worship, provoke God to abandon Men to their own foolish selves; and by his Just Judgment to deliver them up to the Devil, to be deluded in their own way, and left in a State of Blindness, Hardness, and Infidelity.

Upon these accounts it is very necessary for those who desire to have a true Sense of God, not to forsake or neglect our Regular Assemblies (as the manner

manner of some is) but to Resort duly to the Solemnities of God's Worship, and (as the Apostle speaks) *to Pray without ceasing*, Thes. 5. 17. that is, by religiously observing the stated and fixt Times of Devotion, as frequently as they occur. By this means there will be an Intermision of those worldly Cares and Pleasures, which are naturally apt to draw off your Minds from a Sense of God; you will recal your fugitive Thoughts, and place them upon their true Object; you will daily refresh your Hearts with the consideration of the Divine Nature; and by degrees you will be led to Assimilate your own Nature to it; which is the highest Felicity we are capable of attaining unto.

To draw now towards a Conclusion. I have insisted the longer upon this Practical Head, concerning the Improving and Encreasing in our Minds a true Sense of God, because it is a thing of such vast Moment and Use; and that in *Two* respects: 1. *First*, It will serve so to Govern your Mind, and Direct all your Actions, that in the whole Course of your Life, you may *keep Innocence,*

Innocence, and do that which is Right. And 2. *Secondly*, It will serve to bring you solid and substantial *Peace at the last.*

1. It will serve so to Govern your Mind, and to Direct all your Actions, that in the whole Course of your *Life* you may *keep Innocence, and do that which is Right.* For a true Sense of God is always attended with the Apprehension of his Authority over us, the obligatory Nature of all his Laws, his Justice, Goodness, Power, and the like. Now, when a Man comes to have such a Sense of God, and to obey it, it will be no easy matter for him to Act any thing, for which his own Heart shall condemn him; because he is constantly directed by a well-informed Conscience within his Breast; and a Religious Fear of God is the great Rule of all his Actions. The Divine Monitor within him will still check his sinful Inclinations, and hinder him from complying with those Allurements, whereby the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, will tempt him to do Evil; so that he has little need of any Laws but those of Religion to govern him in the Duties he owes to God and Man.

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Shew me now a Man, who has abandoned the Sense of God, that can Act so innocently and well, whatever the Rule be, whereby he conducteth himself. Suppose it be Pleasure, (which was *Epicurus's* Rule;) and where is the *Epicurean* that will forbear Adulteries, Lasciviousness, Drunkenness, or any scandalous Sorts of Debauchery, or sensual Gratifications, if they be but consistent with his Health? *Epicurus's* strict Diet at last was nothing but a forced Method, when his Diseases were great, to save himself from Death as long as he could: Suppose Self-love and private Utility be the Man's Rule; and where is the *Hobist* that will forbear Frauds, Oppression, Ingratitude, or any other Acts of Injustice, whereby he may get or save his Mammon of Unrighteousness? Suppose the Laws of the Nation to be his Rule; and where is such a *Commonwealths Man* as will forbear Malice, Revenge, Violence, Rapine, nay, Bloodshed and Murders, if he can escape the Magistrate's Hand? There is no true Tye of Conscience upon him: He reckons all Injustice to be founded upon Covenants, Promises, and the Institution of Humane Societies; so that
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were there no Laws of Men against it, it would not be unjust to Debauch ones Mother, or to cut the Throat of ones Father. Nay; the most Solemn Oaths can never Tye such Men. For *an Oath* (say they) *adds nothing to the Obligation* which Men have laid voluntarily upon themselves by covenanting together for Civil Society; and those Covenants being made with Respect to every ones Private Interest, it follows, that when Private Interest requires it, 'tis lawful to break any Oath.

Now, how can any one think that those who go upon these Principles can act Innocently in their Lives, and do that which is Right; especially, when it lies in their Power to do Evil, and when they have an Opportunity of doing it? No; 'tis only a true Sense of God that can keep Men within Bounds, so as to eschew Evil, and to do Good for God's sake, upon a Principle of Duty to him, and Fear of him. This will effectually serve to Bridle our Inclinations, to Command and Govern our Passions, and so to Regulate all our Actions, that by keeping God duly in our Thoughts, we may keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.

2. Besides

Secondly, Besides this great Advantage which the Sense of God will bring you now, it will serve also to bring you Substantial and Solid *Peace at the last*. When a Man lies upon his Death-bed, and comes to Think; *Three* things are apt to occur to his Thoughts; his past Pleasures; his worldly Concernments; and how he has served God, before whom he is in a short time to appear to give an Account of All. Now, to Argue upon these Topicks; And,

1. *First*, For your *Pleasures*; suppose they are Innocent in their Kind, and in their own Nature: When a Man is on his Death-bed, and has the Prospect of a Future State, and stands in the greatest need of Comfort, consider, I beseech you, what Comfort this can afford you, that you have had your Diversions and Pastime in this World? What comfortable Account can that turn to, when you are now *leaving* the World? In the Conclusion it will appear, That all this was no less or more than *Vanity*; and 'tis odds but *Vexation of Spirit* follows it; especially if your lawful Pleasures were not rightly circumstan-

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cumstantiated. For Circumstances do alter things which are in their own Nature purely indifferent, and accidentally render them either Good or Evil; so that Pleasures which are innocent in *themselves*, may become sinful in their *Use*; as, when they are used in an inordinate *Measure*, or after an undue *Manner*, or to bad *Ends*, or at improper and unseasonable *Times*; in which Case I cannot yet see, how such People of Pleasure can go out of the World with so much Ease of Soul, as every Brute Beast dies with: For those Irrational Creatures Eat and Drink, and Generate, and follow the Conduct of all their Sensual Appetites, and all this without Sin, because their Faculties are not capable of higher and more noble Laws; and where *there is no Law, there can be no Transgression*. But the business of Mankind is quite *another* thing; namely, to employ their Rational Faculties upon the Service of God, and in doing all the Good we can in the World. This is our great Errand in this Life of ours. Now, when a Man at his last Hour considers how many Hours and Days, perhaps Months and Years, he has mispent upon
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his Follies and Vanities, which ought to have been expended in Acts of Devotion, Charity, Justice, Goodness, and Universal Love; the Reflection must needs be sad: I am sure it cannot possibly Minister any solid and substantial Peace to a departing Soul.

And if Innocent Pleasures (I mean, Innocent in themselves) are so insignificant, what can we think of those which are of a vicious and foul Nature; as the Pleasures of *Sodom*, Drunkenness, and all sorts of scandalous Lewdness and Debauchery, which the Atheistical Principles of some have *Connived* at, perhaps *Encouraged*, for the Propagation of Atheism in all others? Can such Practices give you any degree or sort of Peace when you come to Dye? It cannot possibly be, but (if your Consciences be stirring and awake at that time) the Remembrance of such Criminal Pleasures will be very bitter; because Remorse, and Anguish, and a wounded Conscience is the Natural Consequent of Guilt; and a *wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14.

2. Another thing which occurs to a Dying man's Thoughts (and that mostly) is about his *Worldly Concernments*;

and I entreat you to consider, what solid and substantial Peace this can give a Man at the last, if he has reflective and serious Thoughts about him. Suppose his Riches to have been left him by his Ancestors; and what Comfort can it be to him, on his Death-bed, to consider, that he has not made due Returns of Gratitude to the Good Providence of God, by Acts of Piety, Goodness and Charity to those who have stood in need of his Assistance? Suppose he has gotten his Riches by his own Industry and Diligence; what Comfort can it be to him, on his Death-bed, if he has not express'd his real Thankfulness to God for his Blessing upon his Endeavours? Nay, perhaps has abused God's Blessing, and misapplied his Wealth by Pride, Luxury, Injustice, and Oppressions (which are too common a Trade among Men of Bulky Fortunes, whose Avarice many times is like *Death*, that *s pares none*.) Suppose again, That a Man has lawfully Inherited his Fortunes, or fairly Purchased them, and not misapplied them; and what Comfort can it be to him, on his Death-bed, to consider, into what Hands they may fall after all, and

and what will become of them in the End? I am willing to suppose every thing on the candid Side; and yet I cannot well forget what the Inspired Psalmist said, Psalm 39. 6. *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up Riches, and knoweth not who shall gather (or enjoy) them.* And what his wise Son said after him, Eccles. 2. 18, 19. *I hated all my Labour which I had taken under the Sun, because I should leave it unto the Man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise Man or a Fool; yet shall he have Rule over all my Labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed my self wise under the Sun. This is also Vanity.*

3. Therefore there is nothing like to a true Sense of God, to bring a Man solid and substantial Peace at the last. Pleasure and Riches (the two great Allurements, wherewith this World doth tempt us) can never do it; but a true Sense of God will make a Man's Soul to dwell at Ease, as the Expression is, Psalm 25. 13. For the Principles tending thereunto are these;

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That God's Dominion is Supreme over All; That his Laws carry with them the Highest and most Sacred Authority, and must be obeyed whatever here befall us; That all his Dispensations are Just and Good; That he deals with all Men according to their Deserts; That he careth for us All, especially for those that Obey him; That in this World nothing that is Good shall be wanting to such as lead a Godly Life; and that in the other World he has prepared for Them that love him such things as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither can yet enter into the heart of Man to conceive. These, and the like Principles, which our Religion furnisheth us very plentifully with, are naturally apt to cast an Influence upon the Mind of every serious and considerate Person, so as to induce him to live Godlily, Righteously, and Soberly in this present World. Upon which Practice it is impossible but Peace of Mind will attend every one, who has thus made God his sure Friend; so that he may safely Repose all his Cares in God's Bosom. Besides, the Practice of Virtue and Religion is so naturally Productive of solid Comfort, that I dare say,

say, no Man ever did a truly good Action, but he presently received great Satisfaction of Mind by it, as a Reward for it thrown into his own Bosom.

Here then give me leave to deal freely with you. Would you enjoy substantial Comfort of Heart throughout the whole Course of your Life to the last Extremity? I am sure it is your greatest Concernment, and therefore hope it is your great Desire, Why, the way, in short, is this; to *possess your Mind continually with a serious Sense of God and Religion; and to govern all your Actions by it, as a constant Rule.*

'Tis said of a notorious Atheistick Writer in our own Nation, whose pernicious Principles I have examined, That being asked on his Death-bed how he was? the sad Answer he made, was, That he was *going to take a Leap in the Dark.* And what Construction can you reasonably make of that Expression, but this, That after all his studied Endeavours to corrupt this Age, he himself was dissatisfied with his own Doctrines? That he was then *unresolved* (at least) in his own Mind? That he could not guess whether he

was going, or what would become of him? That he mistrusted the Worst? And that he had before him a dismal Prospect of a *Kingdom of Darknes* indeed? Now, would you be in such a bad Case at your last Hour? Would you then have nothing but dark Thoughts about you? And nothing before you, but Darknes to take a *Leap* into? If this be your Mind, you may follow Him as your Guide, and take his Fate. But we might justly wonder, that any who has been bred up in this Nation, should be in such a Case, if he would call his own Reason home. Indeed, did we live in blind Times of Heathenism, it were somewhat excusable, if People went out of the World with dark Thoughts about them. But since the Eternal Son of God has long ago brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel, how can we chuse but *look for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, as the Apostle speaks, *Tit. 2. 13.* especially if we practically observe what the foregoing Words teach us, That *denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in*
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this present World. For the Remembrance of a good Life can never be bitter; the Nature of the thing it self makes it impossible: Nor can the Prospect of a most blessed Life to come, be attended without unspeakable Complacency; so that whether a Religious Person looks backward or forward, he must needs find great Comfort on each Hand. And all this is the Effect of a Religious Sense of God, especially when it is daily *improved*. For as the Sense of God's Authority, Power, Justice, and the like, exalted such a Man to entire Obedience to the Laws of Religion in his Life-time; so the Sense of God's Goodness, and Mercy, and Love of Souls, excites in him great Hopes to the very last; *Bright, Cherishing, Reviving* Hopes, that he shall see the Goodness of God in a Future State; that he shall receive a Crown of Righteousness, which God the Righteous Judge will give him in that Day; and that when the Earthly House of this Tabernacle is dissolved, he shall have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. And can any thing but this Hope be such a Comfort to you at your last

Hour?

Hour? In order hereunto therefore be sure to Act always according to a Religious Sense of God, as it becometh People who profess the Knowledge and Love of God; and as you will Answer it to God another Day. This will guide you safely; this will make God your Stay; this will be your sure Anchor, and strong Hold, when all the Vanities of this World are slipping out of your Hands; this will Support you amidst all Discouragements; this will refresh you, when nothing else can, in a languishing Condition: And above all, this will *Prepare, Fit,* and *Dispose* you for the Enjoyment of the Ever Blessed God in another World: Whither God of his Mercy bring us all, for Christ Jesus his sake. *Amen.*

C H A P. VIII.

THE next Practical Head must be this, that we must entertain in our Minds such Apprehensions of God, as are becoming and worthy of him. For the Design of this Undertaking being to Excite your Mind to a due Practice of Religion, the Foundation of all must be laid here; because such as our Conceptions of God are, such will our Behaviour towards him be. To which purpose that Pious Heathen, *Epicætetus*, speaking of the Gods in the Plural Number, (according to the Fashion of those times) and perhaps meaning but one, he says, (*Cap. 38.*) That the Principal thing in Religion, is, to have right Conceptions of the Gods, as Beings existing, and ordering all things after a fitting and righteous Manner; and that you should prepare your self to Obey them, and to Acquiesce in their Dispensations, and to follow with a willing Mind their Providence, as proceeding from the best Wisdom. Upon which Passage in *Epicætetus*, *Simplicius* the Philosopher observes,

serves, That whether a Man denies the Existence of the Gods; or (though he owns that) believes not that they mind Humane Affairs; or (though he acknowledgeth both) thinks that they are unjustly or unwisely managed; such a Man can never Honour, Worship, or Obey the Gods, as he ought to do. This is *Certain* and *Plain*, That as our Minds conceive of God, so are our Actions towards him. In order therefore to my Design of stirring you up to the due Practice of Religion, it will be necessary for me to shew these Two things. 1. *First*, What becoming and worthy Apprehensions of God we are to entertain in our Minds. And 2. *Secondly*, How we are to Express those Apprehensions by suitable Acts of Religion.

1. *First*, What are those *Becoming* and *Worthy* Apprehensions of God, which we are to entertain in our Minds. Now, in short, such Apprehensions must be *agrecable* to God's own *Nature*: For it is impossible for us to Conceive *Becomingly*, *Worthily*, or *Rightly*, of God, but as he is in Himself; all other Thoughts, which are repugnant to the
Glories

Glories of his Essence, or inconsistent with them, are Debasements of his Divine Nature; and in truth, Contumelies and Blasphemies.

Here then, for the clearer understanding of this matter, I intreat you remember what has been formerly shewed, That the Notion of God includes *Absolute Perfection*; so that all those sorts of Excellencies, and all those degrees of Excellency and Perfection which are any where in the Universe, and in the very noblest of God's Creatures, are Eminently and Transcendently in Himself, (the great Cause of them) without the least Defect or Imperfection. For all Imperfection implieth Want; which we cannot imagine to be in a Being, in whose Nature there is absolute Fulness, as there necessarily is in the Nature of God, who is utterly independant of any foreign Cause, and therefore incapable of being deprived of any manner of Perfection.

Now, upon this most rational Principle, That God is a Being absolutely and transcendently Perfect, we must, according to Reason, conceive these following Apprehensions of him, because
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they are agreeable to his own most Perfect, Excellent, and Glorious Nature, and consequently Becoming and Worthy of God.

I. We must Apprehend him to be an Immaterial Being. For every Material or Bodily Substance falls vastly short of Absolute Perfection, how Thin and Pure soever we suppose that Substance to be; because these following Properties are Essential to all Matter, and Inseparable from it. Every material Substance is made up of *Parts*, one *without* another; so that they constitute Dimensions, and thereby become divisible one Part from another; and consequently the Contexture of it is naturally destroyable. Again, every material Being must be confined at one *Time* to one distinct *Place*, because its Parts must necessarily take up each of them its distinct and proper Room, suitable to its Dimensions. Bodies cannot penetrate Bodies, so as that one and the same space shall serve for All; but one must Jostle and Resist another; nor is it possible for any material Substance to be at the same Time in the same Place where another resteth. Again, every material Substance hath
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some *Figure* or other, because all its Parts are circumscribed and limited to such a Length, Depth, Breadth, and Thickness; and because it bears some Figure or other, it is more or less *visible*, and capable of being seen with ones Eye. Again, every material Substance must have Accidents, or External Modes, such as Colour, or the like, whereby they become visible, because we cannot look into the Inward Essence of any thing; all that we behold are the Outward Accidents, Shows, or Forms. Once more, every material Substance, as such, is naturally at *Rest*, void of all Inward Power of moving *it Self*, and standing in need of some Outward, Foreign Cause, to Impel and Force it. Now all these Essential Properties of Matter are so many *Imperfections*. Its poor and destroyable Frame; its Confinements and Limitations; its scanty Sizes; and its utter need of outward Advantages, as well as its want of inward Powers; all these things natural Reason will tell us, are plain *Defects*, and therefore are very unbecoming and unworthy Apprehensions to be entertained of God, being so contrary to his most perfect Nature. *God is a Spirit,*
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saith our Saviour, *John* 4. 24. And, to whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One, *Isaiah* 40. 25.

2. We must apprehend God to be an *Omnipresent* and *Eternal* Being. *Omnipresent*, that though he be said to be after a peculiar manner in Heaven, in respect of the Manifestations of his Glory; and in the Hearts of his Saints, by the Operations of his Grace; yet he is every where in respect of the Imensity of his Divine *Essence*; neither included within any Bounds, nor shut out of any Place; because these are Defects, properly belonging to Material and Finite Substances, and therefore Inconsistent with the Amplitude of an Absolutely Perfect Nature. Hence the Holy Scripture tells us, That *the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God*, *1 Kings* 8. 27. That *Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool*, *Isaiah* 66. 1. And that he filleth all things, *Jer.* 23: 24. And hence was that Devout Meditation of the Inspired Psalmist, *Psalm* 139. 7, 8, 9, 10. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Hell, behold, thou art there. If*
I take

I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the utmost parts of the Sea, even there shall thine Hand lead me. Again, we must apprehend God to be Infinite, as in respect of *Place*, so in respect of *Duration* also; that is, to have a Being unlimited by *Time*, without Beginning and without End, because Inchoation of Existence, and Finishing of Existence, includes great Defect. For should any Man be so Wild as to imagine, that once God was not in Being, he must necessarily suppose too, that there was a Prior-Cause which did afterwards, and in time give him his Being: And should a Man be so Senseless as to suppose, that there will be once an *End* of God's Being, he must suppose too, that there is some Superior Cause that will put it to an End, or that his Being is Mortal and Perishable in its own Nature. Now to suppose any of these things, would be to suppose *Imperfection* and *Defect*; because it argues a *Dependence* and *Precariousness* of Existence. To be limited to a *Time* of Existing, is one Imperfection; to be *Beholding* for Existence, is another Imperfection; and to depend upon Courtesy for the Continuance of

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Existence, is another Imperfection. We our selves, poor Imperfect Creatures as we are, cannot but be very sensible of this; for every Day shews what imperfect and defective things we are in depending upon Causes, both for the Rise and Term of our Lives; and therefore in our Conceptions of God (the first and supreme Cause of all things) we must lay *aside* all Apprehensions of Dependence and Precariousness of Existence; all Thoughts of the Beginning or End of his Existence; because they are utterly inconsistent with the Nature of a Divine Being, that is Eminently, Transcendently, and Absolutely Perfect; a God, that has an absolute Fulness of Being in himself, and is the Inexhaustible Fountain of Life to every living Creature. Therefore the Holy Scripture gives us this Account of God, that *from everlasting to everlasting he is God*, Psalm 90. 2. That he is *He, which is, and which was, and which is to come*, Rev. 1. 4. That he is the King, Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible, 1 Tim. 1. 17. That he only hath Immortality, 1 Tim. 6. 16. And that the Description God gives of himself, is this, *I Am*, Exod. 3. 14. Signifying thereby
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his Eternity, without either Beginning or End, his unchangable Nature, Perfection and Infinity; *ὁ αὐτός*, the only Being, that is eternally Existing, both in respect to Eternity *Past*, and to *Come*.

3. We must apprehend God to be an *Omniscient*, or All-knowing Being; because this Perfection is naturally connected with the former. For a Spiritual Being that pervadeth all Things, and an Omnipresent Being that is in all Places, and an Eternal Being that is without beginning of Days or end of Life, must necessarily understand every thing, whether past, or present, or to come; supposing him to be an Intellectual Being, as God is to the utmost Degrees of Perfection. Besides, this is included in the very Notion of a Being, that is Transcendently and Absolutely Perfect; because all Ignorance is manifestly a Defect, a want of Knowledge, and therefore inconsistent with Divine Perfection. This Defect we find daily in our own selves, though we are apt to be proud of our Knowledge above all things. Though God has liberally bestowed his Blessings upon Mankind; yet they are in no Case so well contented with his Providence;

as they are with his Distribution of Knowledge. Every little Man fancies that he has a large Stock of that, and a greater Share than his Neighbours. And yet in every Case we all find, that we know in *Part* only; and therefore this Defect must not have any room amidst our Apprehensions of God; because his Absolute Perfections cannot possibly admit the least Imperfection of Knowledge. Hence the Holy Scriptures tell us, That God knoweth all things, *John 3. 20. That Hell and Destruction are before him, Prov. 15. 11. That his Eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, 2 Chron. 16. 3. That he knoweth what is in the Darkness, and that Light dwelleth with him, Dan. 2. 22. That he knoweth the Secrets of the Heart, Psalm 44. 21. That he sheweth the things that are to come hereafter, as well as the former things, Isaiah 41. 22, 23. That there is no Creature that is not manifest in his sight; but that all things are naked and opened to his Eyes, Heb. 4. 13. That he knoweth our down-sitting and our up-rising, and understandeth our Thoughts afar off; That he compasseth our Paths and our Beds, and is acquainted with all our ways; and that there is not a word in our Tongues, but he knows it altogether, Psal. 139. 2, 3, 4.*

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4. That we may entertain becoming and worthy Notions of God, we must apprehend him to be an Omnipotent or All-Powerful Being, that is able to do whatsoever is possible to be done. For the Explication of this Matter, we must know: *First*, That some things are naturally, and in themselves impossible to be done; as for the same thing to be really and in truth, and yet not to be really and in truth at the same time; and for to be one thing, and one Sort and Species of thing, and for the same thing to be made at the same instant a quite different thing, it is impossible, because the Nature of the thing cannot bear it; it is utterly incapable of being done; in which Case, though there be no Defect of Power in the Agent, there is an utter Defect (or rather an utter Impossibility) in the thing it self. *Secondly*, Some things are therefore Impossible, because they are utterly inconsistent with God's own Nature, and repugnant or contrary unto his Glorious Excellencies; as to be perfectly Just, and yet Unrighteous; to be perfectly Merciful, and yet Cruel; to be perfectly Good, and yet Spiteful, Tyrannical and Mischievous; this is

Impossible, and most Unbecoming and Unworthy to be thought of God, whose most Glorious Attributes cannot with any Piety or Reason be conceived to Clash with one another, or to be Opposite to one another, as in a State of War. Hence Divines say, That God cannot do what either directly, or by necessary Consequence implies a Contradiction. As, the Scripture says, he cannot Lye, because it would be a Contradiction to the perfect Veracity of his Glorious Nature; neither can he do other Impossibilities, because it would be as much a Contradiction in the things themselves, as it is to say, that *This* thing Is, and is Not at the same Moment. Therefore in apprehending God to be Omnipotent, or All-Powerful, we must conceive him Able to do whatever is possible to be done, according to the Nature of the thing it self; and whatever is not Inconsistent with the Infinite Perfections of his *Own* Nature. For, not to be Able to do what is possible to be done, or may be done, is a plain Argument of Imperfection, and of a Limitation of Power in the Agent, either by the Force of a greater Power, or by the unconquerable

able Resistance of a most stubborn Object; and for that Reason it is unworthy (nay, impossible) to be conceived of a Being that is absolutely Perfect, because the Notion it self would imply a Contradiction. And thus the Holy Scriptures teach us, That he is the Almighty God, *Gen. 17. 4. That Power belongeth unto him, Psal. 62. 11. That he is Excellent in Power, Job. 37. 23. That in his hand there is Power and Might, so that none is able to withstand him, 2 Chron. 20. 6. That whatsoever he pleased, that he hath done in Heaven, in the Earth, in the Seas, and in all deep places, Psam 135. 6. That with him nothing is impossible, Luke 1. 37. And that with God all things are possible, Matth. 19. 26.*

But now, because an Almighty Power, if it be not regulated and governed by the Eternal Laws of Justice and Goodness, would be Omnipotent Tyranny, an Infinite Mischief to Mankind, a Scandalous Reproach to the Divine Nature, and a most terrible Discouragement to true Religion, and to the hearty Love of God; therefore,

5. In the next place, we must apprehend God to be a most Righteous, as well as a most Powerful Being. By the

Righteousness of God I mean, not only the immutable Rectitude of his Perfect Nature, but more especially the Perfect Righteousness of his Actions towards all the Children of Men, in dealing with them according to the Eternal Rules of Right Reason, as the Nature and Quality of Mens Works doth deserve. It is according to the eternal Rule of Right Reason, to Reward good Actions, and to Punish evil Ones; and to Proportion those Rewards and Punishments to those Degrees of Good and Evil, which Mens Actions carry with them: Otherwise Injury would be done, which is inconsistent with the Rules of Reason and Righteousness. Therefore in our Thoughts of God, we must by all means remove all Conceptions of his wronging his poor Creatures; especially since he has so often promised to Temper his Justice with Mercy. 'Tis true, our very best Actions cannot endure a severe and strict Judgment, by reason of the mixture of many Humane Infirmities; so that should God strictly Mark what is done amiss, who could abide it? But a Promise of Mercy having been made, in and through our Blessed Mediator, to all that Obey him, it
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hath transferred and given to all such, a Right to Mercy, for his sake; inso-much that the Apostle tells us, *If we confess our sins*, (meaning, so as to forsake them) *he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, 1 John 1. 9. After all this, to conceive any the least unequal dealing in God's Actions towards us, is not only an unbecoming and unworthy Apprehension, but moreover a Blaspheming of his Divine and most Perfect Nature. For all Injustice is a great Blemish and Imperfection; which even we mortal Men never betray, but by the Weakness of our Judgment, or by the Prevalency of our present Interests and Wants, or by the Partiality of our corrupt Affections and Passions; and therefore it is unconceivable of that Infinitely Perfect Being, the Ever-blessed God, the Great Sovereign of the World, who is Infinitely Happy in himself, and utterly free from all Wants, Passions, and Infirmities, and from all manner of Temptations to Byass him to Partiality in his Actions: *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* as Abraham said, Gen. 18. 25. Yes, most certainly, the Infinite and Adorable

Adorable Perfections of his Nature require it. *God is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works*, saith the devout Psalmist, *Psalm 145. 17.* And again, *The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Countenance beholdeth the thing that is Just*, *Psalm 11. 7.* And to the same purpose saith the God of Truth himself, *Are not my ways equal?* *Ezek. 18. 29.* And this was one of those things which St. John heard in Heaven, *Alleluiah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power, be unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his Judgments*, *Rev. 19. 1, 2.*

6. Further yet, that we may have becoming and worthy Apprehensions of God, we must conceive him to be a perfectly Good, Kind, and Beneficent Being; a Being that is not only Good, or absolutely Perfect in himself, to the utmost Degree possible; but that is moreover communicative of his Goodness to his Creatures, according to their several Capabilities; that is the Author of all the Good in the Universe; whose Nature is the Rule of all the Goodness in the World, so that it is to be accounted Goodness, according to the Proportion it bears in its Likeness to

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the Goodness of God. He is a Being, that takes a due Care of all his Creatures, and of every Part of the Universe, with respect to the Good of the whole; open-handed to all, and filling all things living with Plenteousness daily. A Being that takes an especial Care of Rational Creatures; distributing his common Mercies amongst All, whether they be Just or Unjust; denying his Spiritual Blessings to none; yet suiting them to their several Qualifications, and Wants; Assisting, Strengthening, and Comforting good People with Encreases of his Divine Grace, and with the Influences of his Holy Spirit in all their Conditions; and calling evil People to Repentance, by his Patience in Expectation of their Amendment, by his Long-suffering in deferring Punishment, by his Fatherly Corrections when nothing else will do, by his Clemency in moderating his Chastisements, and by his readiness to Pardon when either Gentleness or Discipline serves to Reclaim them.

Such just Apprehensions we ought to have of God, who is Infinitely the best and most desirable Being in the World. For whatever is inconsistent with

with an Inclination to do Good, is an Argument of great Imperfection; whether it be a Principle of Envy, which Begrudgeth and Repines at another's Good; or whether it be a Principle of Selfishness, which consults ones own Good only; or whether it be Spight, Malice, and Revenge, which aims at Mischief; these and the like ill-natur'd Passions are Vices; and such Vices as are a Stain and Disreputation, even to Humane Nature; Arguments of sordid and base Tempers; Signs of narrow and abject Spirits, of low Minds, and of mean, beggerly Intentions; and such as peculiarly belong to Poor, Indigent Creatures; nay, Vices which have so much of the very Devil in them, that they are utterly, and to the last degree quite opposite to the Glorious Perfections of that Self-sufficient Being, of whom the Holy Scripture gives this just Character, That God is Love; and Goodness is what he Delights in, the glorious Ray and Lustre of his Nature; so that, as some great Divines have exprest it, to suppose him to be without Goodness, is to suppose God without a Deity; so Essential is this Perfection to the Excellence of his Nature;

ture; so necessarily included in the Notion of God, that to deny his Goodness is, in effect, to deny his Being. To remove out of our Minds all such unworthy Conceits of God, and to set them at a great distance from us, the Holy Scriptures tell us, That *Good and Upright is the Lord*, Psalm 25. 8. That *he is Gracious, and full of Compassion, slow to Anger, and of great Mercy; that he is good to All; that his tender Mercies are over all his Works*, Psalm 145. 8, 9. That *he is Rich in Mercy*, Ephes. 2. 4. And that he is the Father of Light, from whom every good Gift, and every perfect Gift cometh down, *James* 1. 13.

7. To conceive worthily of God, we must apprehend him to be a Provident Being also; I mean a Being, that by the efficacious Energy of his Will upholds and conserves his Creatures, with their several Properties, Faculties and Powers, belonging to their Natures; that oversees all the Works of his Hands; that disposeth all things; directing all subordinate Causes, and ordering Events, so as that in respect of Himself there is nothing casual; and that governs Mankind with such Laws, Assistances, Promises, and Threats, as
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are suitable to our Rational Nature. These Conceptions are congruous to the Nature of God; they necessarily follow, and are connected with the Conception of those Perfections, which I have already demonstrated, both by plain Reason, and by infallible Revelation. For, should we suppose there were no Divine Providence, we must suppose too, that there are many Defects, which are utterly inconsistent with the absolute Perfections of the Divine Nature: As a Defect of Omnipresence, which is inconsistent with one of his Perfections; a Defect therefore of the Spirituality of his Nature, which is repugnant to another; a Defect of Omniscience, which destroys a third; a Defect of Power, which is contrary to a fourth Perfection; a Defect of Righteousness, which overthrows a Fifth; and a Defect of Goodness, which is inconsistent with the Sixth. For, if God's Providence be not over all things, it will follow, that he is a Being which is confined, unobserving, unconcerned how the Affairs of the World go; without Power and Will to take care of the Universe; and consequently incapable of calling Mankind to Account,
and

and to Reward or Punish them for their Actions. And therefore such are the Doctrines of our *Epicureans*, who to avoid the Scandalous Character of Profess'd and Open Atheists, make mention of the Name of God, but yet Represent him under such Notions, as make him a Deity not worth any Man's owning; such Notions as serve directly to Banish him out of the World, and to destroy his very Essence, by destroying his Perfections; like their old Heathen Master, who own'd God in Words, and denied him in Fact. They Represent him like a Huge Gygantick Man, a material Being, that Dwells, they know not where, in some pleasant Region without the World, there leading a restive, sedentary Life, and enjoying the great Happiness of Ease and Carelessness; not minding or meddling with the things of this World, because, forsooth, they afford Disturbance, Toil, or Trouble. In which dull Conceit they grossly mistake, both the Nature of that Happiness, which a Being of absolute Fulness doth enjoy; and also the Manner of the Divine Oeconomy, supposing it could not be executed without Distractions, Uneasiness, Cumberfomness,

berfomnefs, and Labour; all which are Arguments of great Imperfection, proper to finite, poor Beings, whose Power is limited and very scanty; whose Bodies cannot Act upon any thing but Matter; and whose Activity must therefore meet with Resistance and Opposition: All which Defects are impossible to be with Reason ascribed (or any of them) to a Deity, whose Nature is eminently, transcendently, and absolutely Perfect.

Now, to remove out of our Minds all unworthy and dishonourable Apprehensions of God, in relation to his Providence over the World, we must believe that He is of such absolute Plenitude and Fulness in his Nature, as that his Essence must be Boundless both by Time and Place; and that his Attributes of Knowledge, Power, Righteousness, and Goodness, (which are inseparable from his Nature, and but so many Inadequate Conceptions of one and the same Being) are as Boundless as his Essence; so that in every part of the Universe they vitally Operate in exercising the Sovereignty of his Dominion over all; by Inspecting every Individual in the Creation; by Superintending

intending and taking a suitable Care of them; by Supporting their Natures and Faculties; by ordering their Operations; and by disposing and directing their Effects in Congruity to those Purposes which his Wisdom and Goodness intended them for. To conceive otherwise of God, would be to Impeach him of Defects, and to Destroy his Glorious Attributes, (at least, as to his Creatures) because his Knowledge, Power, Righteousness and Goodness, would not turn to Account without the Exercise of them; nor would they be of any use to the Blessed God himself, considered as a Sovereign Governor of all things. Therefore to convince us of the Particular, as well as General Providence of God, Divine Revelation assures us, *That the Lord preserveth Man and Beast*, Psalm 36. 6. *That he ruleth by his Power for ever, and his Eyes behold the Nation*, Psalm. 66. 7. *That he giveth food to all flesh*, Psalm 136. 25. *That though a man's heart deviseth his way, yet the Lord directeth his steps; and that though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. 16. 9, 33. *That God maketh Peace; and createth Evil*, Isaiah 45. 7.

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So that *there is no Evil (or Calamity) in a City, which the Lord hath not done,* Amos 3. 6. That he maketh his Sun to rise upon the Evil and the Good, and sendeth his Rain upon the Just and Unjust also, Matth. 5. 45. And that he careth for us, 1 Pet. 5. 7. In short, read but our Saviour's admirable Discourse of taking no anxious Thoughts for the things of this Life, Matth. 6. and you will need no better or further Arguments to satisfy you of God's good Providence over all his Works.

8. To conceive worthy Apprehensions of God, we must, in the last place, believe him to be a *Veracious* Being, meaning, that he is perfectly Sincere in all his Declarations, and Faithful in all his Promises: In short, That he is a Being, whose Words are always Correspondent exactly to his Mind, and whose Mind is always Answerable and Agreeable to his Words. This Attribute doth necessarily belong to his most perfect Nature; because Falshood is an Argument not only of great Imperfection, but moreover of a mean, base, and degenerate Temper; a base Vice in it self, and that which proceeds from base Causes, and is intended for base

Ends.

Ends. For which reason it should belong only to the Devil; who, *when he speaketh a Lye, speaketh of his own* (it is so Natural to him, and should be his peculiar Property) *for he is a Liar, and the Father of Lies*, John 8. 44. It is a vile Reproach to our Humane Nature, a great Tang of the Devil; an odious Disgrace even to profligate Tempers among us, to the most dirty Part of Mankind, and therefore must be inconsistent, to the last degree, with the absolute Perfections of God Blessed for evermore. God is not Man, that he should lye, Numb. 23. 10. No; let God be True, though every man be a Liar, Rom. 3. 4. For though we believe not, yet God is faithful, 2 Tim. 2. 13. For it is impossible for God to lye, Heb. 6. 18. He cannot Lye, Tit. 1. 2. It is so utterly Repugnant and Contradictory to the glorious Perfections of his Nature, that he can as soon cease to be God, as cease to be the God of Truth.

I have dwelled the longer upon the Consideration of God's Perfections, and shew'd how necessarily they are Connected together, and do naturally flow from this Principle, That the Notion of God signifies Absolute Perfection;

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p. 192.
191.
371.

I have, I say, been the more particular upon it, that you may see what demonstrative Reasons there are for our Conceptions of them; Reasons drawn from the Consideration of the most perfect Nature and Essence of God himself; and that they are infinitely far from being instituted Formalities of Honour and Respect only. For an Atheistick Writer would fain make People believe, that, though in Obedience to the Laws of our Country we are bound to give External Worship to that Object which the Civil Magistrate shall think fit to Pitch upon, as a worshipful thing for his Subjects to bestow Attributes of Respect upon, and to say so and so of that made Deity; yet that all this is nothing but Courtship, Compliment and Ceremonial Stuff, void of all Reasons taken from the Nature of that Object, but grounded purely upon Humane Invention and Institution. Because (saith he) Words (and consequently the Attributes of God) have their Signification by Agreement and Constitution of Men, those Attributes are to be held significative of Honour, that Men intend shall so be. And again; that in the Attributes which

which we give to God, we are not to consider the Signification of Philosophical Truth; but the Signification of pious Intentions, to do him the greatest Honour we are able. And again, In God we consider, not what Attribute expresseth best his Nature, but what best expresseth our desire to Honour him. Now, the open Sense of these Doctrines is this, That there is no real Truth in the Attributes ascribed unto God, nor any Being that in Fact *Leviath.* is Spiritual, Omniscient, infinitely *p. 191.* Powerful, Just, Benevolent, and the like; but that these are honourary Titles only; Precarious Attributes bestowed by the Civil Magistrate on his supposed Deity, *not to declare what he Is, but how much we Admire him:* However, that in Obedienc to the Laws of our Country, and for fear of Punishment, People are obliged to use such honourable Expressions, whatever they think of the Object of their Worship. And the Consequence of these lewd Principles is, That if the Civil Governor should please to set up a *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image to be worshipped, or an *Egyptian* Ox, or Calf, or *Mahomet's* *See pag.* Horse-Tail, or a Popish *Madonna*, *191.* People

ple might give it, either such Negative Attributes, as Infinite, Eternal, Incomprehensible; or Superlatives, as most High, most Great, and the like; or Indefinite, as Good, Just, Holy Creator; because these Complimental Expressions signify nothing of the true Nature of the Object, nor are grounded upon the Nature of the Object of Religious Worship; but are Attributes invented by Humane Authority, and agreed upon by Humane Policy, as so many Signs of Respect and Reverence to Humane Laws. Whence we need not wonder, that those who so slight the Divine Attributes, should ground all Justice upon Humane Compact, and look upon *Religion to be a Fear of Power invisible, feigned by the Mind, or imagined from Tales publickly allowed.*

Therefore, to obviate these Abominable Doctrines, I have shew'd the demonstrable Reasons we have for believing the Truth and Reality of God's Attributes, drawn from the Essence and Nature of God himself, as a Being that is Eminently, Transcendently, and Absolutely Perfect. For upon granting that Notion as true, the Reality and Truth of God's Attributes must necessarily,

farily, naturally, and as in a Chain, follow in our Conceptions of him. And to Justify that Notion, (besides what has been formerly said at large) I shall only desire you to consider now:

1. *First*, That God is an Independent Being, and that necessarily; and therefore cannot be supposed to Exist or Act by the Agency of any Prior, or Superior Cause: This would be a palpable Contradiction, and therefore as utterly impossible, as it is for the same thing to be depending, and yet undepending at the same Time, and in the same Respect. 2. *Secondly*, That God being the Supreme and First Cause, all the Effects which are in the whole Universe must be concluded to be derived originally from him; otherwise some Effects must be supposed to be the Causes of themselves, or to depend upon no Causality at all; which is another palpable Contradiction, and as utterly impossible as it is to Be, and yet Not to Be at the same time, and to be an Effect, and yet not an Effect in the same Respect. 3. *Thirdly*, That God being the only Original Cause of every thing in the World, it must be concluded, that all the Perfections, and

all the Degrees of Perfection which are in his Creatures, must be in God himself; otherwise some Perfections must be supposed to be the Causes of themselves, or to have no perfect Cause *without* them; which is another, and yet palpable Contradiction, and as utterly impossible as it is to be an Effect, to be caused without the Efficiency of any Cause. Whence it necessarily follows, 4. *Fourthly*, That all those Perfections which are in the very noblest Parts of the Creation, whether Men or Angels, must necessarily be in the Author of their Natures; and that too, without those Defects which their Creature-State doth subject them unto: And consequently, in the 5th and *Last* place, That all the Perfections of Knowledge, Wisdom, Righteousness, Goodness, and the like, which to the utmost can be attributed to any Rational Creatures, must of necessity be to all possible Degrees attributed to God; who is the Supreme Cause of all, and therefore to be acknowledged Eminently, Transcendently, and Absolutely Perfect.

These things are as plain, as any Mathematical Demonstrations: I mean

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as plain to all uncaptivated Minds, which are not so wedded to their Conceits, as to be afraid or unwilling to be Divorced from them. And what has been said thus in short, is enough to shew the great Ignorance and Sottishness, as well as the great Impiety of those, who reckon the Attributes and Perfections we ascribe unto God, as Attributes of Honour only; Courtship and External Compliments, which are grounded upon Humane Institution, for Politick Reasons only: Whereas they are apparently and necessarily Attributes of Reality and Truth, grounded upon the Essence and Nature of God; or rather I should say, the very same thing with his Essence and Nature. For though by reason of the Imperfection of our Faculties we are forced to Think and Speak of God's Perfections, his Omniscience, Power, Righteousness, Goodness, and the rest, severally, distinctly, and a part from one another; yet are they all so Essential unto God, as that they are the perfect Nature of one and the same Divine Being. As when we mention the Spirituality, Omnipresence, Almightyness, Justice, Benignity of God, under
distinct

distinct Notions, because we are not able to conceive all at once, we mean nevertheless one Spiritual, Omniscient, Almighty, Just, and Good God.

C H A P. IX.

HAVING thus shewed what Becoming and Worthy Apprehensions of God we are to entertain in our Minds, I proceed now to the Second Practical Consideration; *viz.* How we are to *Express* these Apprehensions by suitable Acts of Religion. For God's Attributes and Perfections are the Foundation of Religion, on which all Piety is necessarily superstruted; so that those who go about to evacuate his Perfections, as Ceremonial Courtship only, can have no other Design by it, but to destroy all Religion, both Revealed and Natural.

Now, here I must be the more Concise, because a particular Explication of our Duties to God will be most proper, when I come to the next General Head
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of devoutly Adoring this most Perfect Being, our God. There are these Four Things in General, which the Summary View of God's Perfections doth naturally Excite our Minds unto:

1. *First*, That we are to Express our Apprehensions of God by Acts of *Worship*. 2. *Secondly*, That we must render unto him such *Singular Worship*, as the Superlative Perfections of his Nature call for. 3. *Thirdly*, That we must return him such *Substantial Services*, as are in some measure Correspondent to his Glories. 4. *Fourthly*, That we must Renounce such Doctrines as directly tend to destroy the Becoming Apprehensions of God. Of these in their Order.

1. *First*, We must Express our Apprehensions of God by Acts of *Worship*. By *Worship* I mean, such a Pious Disposition of Heart, and Veneration of God in the Soul, as is productive of Praises, Prayers, and Thanksgivings, and of such Outward Services, as are apt to signify an Inward and Hearty Devotion. Now, the Transcendent Excellencies of God's Nature are such, as render him an Object most *Worthy* of
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all Veneration, though we only consider him Absolutely, as he is in Himself, a most Glorious and Perfect Being. For, Respect is *Proper* to be shew'd to Dignity; and as the Dignity is higher and higher, so it is more and more worthy of proportionable Acknowledgments; and God's Majesty being Infinitely Excellent and Glorious, that alone would make him a most *Proper* Object of all Honour, so that it would be most *Fit* for us to give him the profoundest Adorations, were there nothing else to Challenge them. But then, if we consider him as a most Glorious Being related to us, as our Creator, Governor, Judge, Powerful, Just, and Good, and on whose Gracious Providence the Welfare of our Bodies and Souls doth depend; so he has a *Right* to all our Acts of Worship; he claims them as his due; so that it would be, not only Impiety, but manifest Injustice (Sacrilege I should say) to Defraud him of those Services of Heart, Tongue and Hand, which he requireth of us, and that justly. Whence we cannot sufficiently blame two sorts of People. 1. Such as for fear of Popular Disgrace, or out of meer Complaisance

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to the Laws of the Nation, shew only an External Civility to Religious Worship; supposing Religion to be grounded upon Humane Institution, and to depend upon the Arbitrarious Pleasure of Civil Government and Authority. This is an Atheistical Principle, and that which is the natural Product of Atheistical Minds: For how can they own any thing really to be of Divine Appointment, who have the Confidence to deny the Existence of a Divine Being? None but Men of Atheistical Minds can go upon this Principle, That Religion is founded upon Humane Institution; because, supposing the Existence of God, all Religion must be derived from the Absolute Perfections of God's own Nature; his Omnipresence, Omniscience, Power, Justice, Goodness, and the like. These are the true and only Originals of Reverence, Caution, Fear, Obedience, Faith, Hope, and other Acts of Religion; all which Perfections of God, are Eternally Antecedent to any Laws of Man. Therefore it is the grossest Impiety, and the most ridiculous Prophaneness, to think that the Worship of God is only a sort of Honorary, State Compliment; for it is
God's

God's Eternal Right, grounded upon the Eternal Perfections of his Nature, and upon those Eternal Obligations to him which we lie under by the reason of those Perfections. On which account it is not only the greatest Infelicity, but also an Indignity and Sin of the highest Nature, to be without God in the World, (the ready way to be without Hope too, *Ephes. 2. 12.*) that is, to live after such an Irreligious Manner, as if there were no God in the World; without offering up Praises for the Infinite Glories of his Nature; without presenting your Prayers to him daily for what you daily want; without returning him humble Thanks for the Mercies you receive; without using those Sacred Ordinances which his Superlative Authority hath appointed; and in short, without tendering unto him your Heart and Affections. These are Services, which God hath an inviolable Claim too; and it is a most sad thing to consider that Men, who owe all they have to God's overflowing Bounty, should (and that obstinately, and upon studied Principles) deny him those Services which are his own justest Due. 2. But besides these, there is another

another Sort of People to be spoke to; People, who though they Profess the Faith of God, and are ready to Startle at the thoughts of Atheism, yet are so Supine, Slothful, and Careless; or so addicted to Immoralities, or at least to the study of their present Secular Interest, that the Worship of God is scandalously neglected by them. Can one think, that such People seriously consider what God is? Do they revolve in their Minds the Thoughts of his Transcendent Perfections? Do they set before them that Divine Being, who is Omnipresent, and Omniscient, Powerful and Just? No, surely; for such Religious Considerations would awaken them out of their Lethargy; would check their Lusts; would drive them out of their Shops into the Church, or at least into their Closets; would throw them upon their Knees, and excite them to work out their Salvation with fear and trembling. A vigorous Sense of God must needs produce a Zeal for his Worship; an Unconcernedness for that, though it may be consistent with a superficial Belief of God's Existence, yet it is inconsistent with God's Honour; a thing which every Religi-

ous Person must think himself bound to consult above all things, lest his own Conscience should accuse him of some secret Root of Bitterness in his Heart, which is as bad as Infidelity; for there seems to be no other difference between a Speculative and a Practical Atheist, than this, That the one disbelieves God, and the other contumeliously slights him; like those the Apostle speaks of, who hold the Truth in unrighteousness, *Rom. 1. 18.* and like those, *Tit. 1. 16.* *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.*

2. Secondly, To Express our Becoming Apprehensions of God, we must render unto him such Singular Worship, as the Superlative Perfections of his Nature call for. God is a Singular and Supereminent Being, of all Kinds and of all Degrees of Perfection; so that though there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven, or in Earth, (as there are Gods many, and Lords many) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, *1 Cor. 8. 5, 6.* Whence it naturally follows that God is to be Addressed

fed to after a singular Manner, and by appropriate Acts of Worship. To substitute Rivals, or to joyn Partners with God in Religious Adorations, or to Worship him in a Manner unsuitable to his Perfections; This would be to derogate from his Greatness above All, and to destroy those Notions, which all Men ought to have, of his Transcendent Nature; This carries its own Light with it. And yet there are Two things, which are very observable; the *First*, what *St. Paul* saith of some Idolaters in his time, (whatever Idolaters they were) he accused them *for worshipping and serving the Creature more than the Creator*; so indeed it is translated out of the *Greek*, Rom. i. 25. But the Learned agree, That it should be rendred, *Besides the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen.* It is probable, that the Apostle there reflected, not so much upon the Followers of *Simon Magus* (though that Opinion hath fair grounds) as upon the Heathens; who, though they acknowledged one Supreme God by Nature, yet (as 'tis notoriously known) they worshipped many Subordinate, Factitious Deities, which they called Demons, as Mediators between them and

the Sovereign Deity ; because they thought it unbecoming the Humility of poor Mortals , to Address themselves immediately to the Glorious Majesty of the Great God. And to this Construction of the Matter I the rather incline, (with Submission to better Judgments) because elsewhere speaking of the same sort of Men, he saith, *To us* (Christians) *there is one God, — and one Lord Jesus Christ* ; meaning one Mediator, *1 Cor. 8. 6.* However we understand it, 'tis certain and plain, That the Apostle intended, that all Religious Worship should be rendred to God alone. The other thing observable, is, what our Blessed Saviour said to the *Samaritan Woman*, *1 John 4.* The occasion was this: The *Samaritans* were utter Enemies to the *Jews*, and the *Jews* to them; and the inveterate Quarrel between them was about Religious Worship. The *Jews* worshipped (at *Jerusalem*) the True God ; and (in our Saviour's time) the True God alone, according to the Ordinances of God by *Moses*. The *Samaritans* worshipped (upon Mount *Gerizim*) Idols of their own, at least, for many Ages, but together with the True God. They were originally Heathens,
Subjects

Subjects to the King of *Assyria*, who transplanted them into *Judæa*, to learn the Religion of the God of that Country; the Story whereof you find, *2 Kings* 17. In *Judæa* they mixed both Religions; so that *they feared the Lord, and served their own Gods too*, *2 Kings* 17. 33. And thus it went on for many Ages, till at length they were brought to cast off all their False Gods, and to Worship the Lord God of *Israel* only, (as a most Learned Writer tells us.) Yet so, that however they seemed to themselves to be true Worshippers, and altogether free from Idolatry, nevertheless they retained a Smack of it, inso-much as they worshipped the True God under a visible Representation; to wit, of a Dove; just as their Predecessors, the Ten Tribes, worshipped the same God of *Israel* under the Similitude of a Calf. And this was the Condition of the *Samaritan* Religion in our Saviour's time. And the Case standing thus, the Question proposed to him by the *Samaritan* Woman was, Who were the true Worshippers of God, and which was the proper Place of Worship? And the Result of our Saviour's Answer was this, *God is a Spirit, and they that wor-*

ship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth, John 4. 24. Which Answer, we may be sure, was both very Pertinent, and very Full, in reference to the *Jews* Worship at *Jerusalem*, (which was by Sacrifices, and other Typical Rites, according to the Levitical Law) and in reference to the *Samaritans* way of Worship at Mount *Gerizzim* (which was by a Corporeal and Visible, but most improper Representation of God.) And from our Saviours Answer we must conclude these Two things.

1. First, That in the times of Christianity, God is to be worshipped, though not without all External Services, yet principally with the Internal Service of the Heart, that worshipping in Spirit, which our Saviour spake of, and which I shall consider in its due Order.
2. Secondly, That all Religious Worship, whether of Soul or Body, ought to be directed to God alone, without the use of any visible Shape or Similitude whatsoever. For unless we conclude this, we cannot conceive, either that our Saviour's Answer to the *Samaritan* Woman's Question, was full to the purpose; or that the Worship of God can be suitable to the Divine Nature, which

which is purely Spiritual , and therefore in Truth utterly incapable of being exhibited by any Bodily Form. Hence the Holy Scripture calls every Idol , or Corporeal Image of God , a Lye : And all Religious Worship given, either to the Image it self, or to God by the Image, is a Belying of God ; because such Acts of Worship are inconsistent with , and repugnant unto the True Notions of God's Perfections, and destructive of all becoming Apprehensions of God , and of that Singularity of Worship, which is due unto him.

Now to make these Observations from *St. Paul's*, and our Saviour's Words Practical , you must take especial Care, That you never lend an Ear to those Seducers , who compass Sea and Land to tempt People to Worship Angels, Saints , Images , Reliques , and other unlawful Objects of Adoration. Such Practices are utterly repugnant to the just Notions we have of God's Incommunicable Glories, and to that Singular Honour which is due to him from his Creatures for his Super-eminent Perfections. And yet as to this the *Romanists* are very great Criminals , in a

Twofold Respect : *First*, In giving to Creatures, nay, even to the Works of *Mens* Hands, a share of that Religious Worship, which the Glorious God hath the sole Right unto. For notwithstanding their nice Distinctions of Worship, whether it be Divine, or an Inferior Sort of Worship, *Religious* Worship it is manifestly ; and upon that account they are to be coupled with those Idolaters St. *Paul* spake of, who worshipped the Creature *besides* the Creator. They are equally Transgressors of what is written, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matth. 4. 10. I do not deny but the Papists Worship the True God, and so did those Idolaters ; yet their great Crime was, that they joyned many inferior Beings with God, as Partners with him in their Religious Addresses : And upon the same Pretences *They* might have excused their Practice, which *These* People now use to excuse their horrible Idolatry. But this is not a Place to Dispute out the Point. *Secondly*, They are great Criminals in Worshipping the True God after a Manner unsuitable to his Perfections, though we should suppose them
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to Worship the True God only, without joyning with him any Angel or Saint. So did the *Israelites* when they worshipped the Moulten-Calf, *Exod. 32.* They could not be so sottish as to think, that the thing to whose making they had contributed their Offerings just then, was the very True God who had brought them out of *Egypt*. No, they had lived a very long time in *Egypt*, where People were universally wont to Worship their Factitious, Inferior Deities, nay the Supreme God himself, under visible Representations, and particularly under the Form of an Ox; and therefore those foolish *Jews* would needs have the visible Form and Shape of a Calf; not renouncing thereby the True God, but as an Emblem of God's Presence in the Absence of *Moses*. Accordingly, they *sat down to eat and drink* before the Image, *and rose up to play*; for which reason *St. Paul* expressly calls them Idolaters, *1 Cor. 10. 7.* To the same purpose that Learned Writer before-mentioned tells us, That in our Blessed Saviour's time, the *Samaritans* worshipped the True God under the visible Representation of a Dove; which our Saviour reprehended as false Wor-

ship, quite inconsistent with such Religious Services as are correspondent to the Truth of the Divine Nature. Now if all this was Idolatry and false Worship, which was directed by the old *Jews* to the Calf, and by the *Samaritans* to the Dove, (as without all question it was) I cannot see how that Worship can be less, which is directed to *Madonna's*, Crucifixes, and the like. For whether the Worship be terminated on the Representation it self, or pretended to pass *by* and *through* it to God himself, as the ultimate Object, the difference seems to be nothing; because the softest of these Pretences could have been made by the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; nay, were actually made by the more intelligent sort of Heathens themselves, who excused their Idol-Adorations, by Referring them ultimately to the Supreme God, whom they acknowledged to be over all. Therefore you must never suffer the thoughts of being a Papist to enter the least into your Heart; because the Singular and Transcendent Perfections of God cannot possibly admit of any Religious Worship, but what is Singular and Appropriate to himself, nor of any manner

manner of Worship which is unsuitable to the Incommunicable Glories of his Divine Nature. Because God is a Peerless Being, transcendently Perfect, both as to his Nature absolutely consider'd, and as to his Glorious Attributes of Wisdom, Power, Justice, and Goodness, which relate to his Creatures, it must necessarily follow, That all Religious Worship is his own peculiar and sole Right, never to be bestowed (without the highest Sacrilege) no not upon the very noblest of his own Works, (which are all Imperfect Beings, especially in Comparison of Himself) much less upon the sorry Works and Manufactures of Men. And hence the Holy Scripture tells us, That God *will not give his Honour to another, neither his Praise to Graven Images*, Isaiah 42. 8. Because it is impossible to be done, but by debasing the Majesty of the most Glorious God, and by raising Subordinate Beings to higher degrees of Perfection, than what are Consistent with their Natures, and suitable to their low Station.

3. *Thirdly*, To Express our becoming Apprehensions of God, we are to return

turn him such *Substantial* Services, as are in some measure Correspondent to his Glories. The Glories of God consist in the Excellencies of his most Perfect Nature, such as the Scriptures have Revealed unto us; and such as I particularly mentioned in speaking of those becoming Apprehensions we ought to have of the Divine Nature; his Omniscience, Power, Justice, Goodness, and the like. Now, those only are Substantial Services on our part, which are in some degree answerable to the Substantial Excellencies of God; as Reverence, Fear, Love, Submission, Hope, and other Affections of devoted Hearts, which naturally spring from a True Sense of God's Glorious Perfections. And this is that Reasonable (or Rational) Service, which is now required by the Evangelical Dispensation, *Rom. 12. 1.* in Opposition to the Positive Ordinances given by *Moses* to the *Jews*, which were not founded upon the Eternal Laws of Reason, and therefore were not acceptable unto God, or appointed by him, for any intrinsic Worth in the Nature of those Ordinances themselves; for which cause they are called, *Weak and beggarly Elements*, *Gal. 4. 9.*

Ordinances,

Ordinances, which could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, *Heb. 9. 9.* because they cleansed Men only from Legal Pollutions, and secured them from the Hand of the Magistrate, without purging their Souls from vicious Habits and moral Impurities. But the Christian Institution is of an higher and nobler Nature; for it requires entire Holiness of Heart; and that for this reason, because God is Holy, *1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.* So that we Christians have for our Pattern, not the Tabernacle which was shewed unto *Moses* in the Mount, but the Ever blessed God himself, whose Perfections the Holy Jesus has commanded us to transcribe on our Hearts, *Matth. 5. 48.* This then being that Substantial Service, which we are to offer unto God, you must learn hence two practical things by way of Caution.

1. Not to place Religion (as the *Romanists* do) in Gaudy Trifles, in Pompous Ostentations, in Comical Shews, and in Empty Formalities; whereof there are among that Herd too too many Instances, which render Christianity a Jest, Play, and foolish Pageantry,

geantry, instead of such Substantial Services of Soul and Mind, as we owe the Mirror and Pattern of all Perfection. I told you before out of our Saviour's Words to the *Samaritan* Woman, in reference to the manner of Worship among the *Jews*, That in the times of Christianity God is to be worshipped in Spirit, meaning, though not without all External Services, yet principally with the Internal Services of the Heart. Indeed, the Worship of God at *Jerusalem* was very Ceremonious and Magnificent; and there were special Reasons for it, which were very proper for those times: For it was intended partly to discriminate the *Jews* from other Nations; partly to point out to the *Jews* themselves the great necessity of Spiritual Purities; partly to create in the Minds of those Dull and Carnal People a Reverential Regard of the Divine Majesty; and partly also to prefigure the Coming of the expected Messiah, with those manifold Blessings, which would accrue to the World thereby. Now, since the Blessed Messiah has been manifested in the Flesh, and hath clearly manifested God to us, and hath taken away the Partition Wall between
between

tween the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel, now under this new Dispensation, no Rites are required of us in God's Publick Worship, but what are decent and according to Order; without such Pomp and Ostentation as is unsuitable to the Gravity of Christ's Institution. *Judge not according to the appearance*, saith our Savivour, *John 7. 24.* For outward Appearance is one thing, and inward Sanctity is another. And that is the main thing which Christ's Religion doth aim at; Repentance from all dead Works, the Mortification of our Lusts, the Renovation of our Spirits, and the serving God in Righteousness and true Holiness. So that it is quite Foreign to the noble Work of Christianity; nay, Inconsistent with it, and Repugnant to its great Design, to place Religion (the gravest Thing in the World) in a naked Outside, in bare Formalities, in ludicrous Superstitions, and in a specious Show. This is to banter Christianity, to ridicule it in a Case of the most serious Concernment; and it looks as if the business of Christians were to be Actors and Hypocrites, to be Beaux and Fops in Religion. I am
sure

sure such a trifling sort of Worship (if yet we may call it Worship) cannot be the *Substantial* Service which is God's Due; because it is so unsuitable to the admirable Excellencies of his Nature, and so utterly unapt to strike us with a transporting Sense of his Glories, or to mould our Wills into an obediential and humble Temper, or to raise in us those noble Affections which his Infinite Greatness calls for; whether it be a Reverence of his Majesty; or an Awe of his Power, or a Fear of his Displeasure, or an Hope in his Goodness, or a Confidence in his Care, or a Dependence upon his Truth, or an inflamed Love kindled in ones Soul by an Apprehension of all his Excellencies, whereby the Heart is knit unto him, as the most desirable Good, and infinitely the most amiable of all the Beings in the whole World. This is that Substantial Service of the Heart and Spirit which I have spoken of; and without which all pompous Formalities are no better in God's Sight, than the Hypocrisies, and foolish Gayeties of a Stage-Play.

2. But then, in the Second Place, you must take great Care, that in avoiding

avoiding idle Superstitions, and empty Gaudinesses on the one Hand, you do not fall into unbecoming Extremes on the other; by placing Religion in odd Singularities, when nothing is order'd in the Publick Worship of God, but what is Grave, Decent, Reasonable, and Useful. This is a great Fault in many deluded People among our selves, That out of a just Aversion to Popery, they have run into other pitiful and fantastical Practices, not suffering themselves to stop in an excellent *Medium*, where the Substantial Service of God is transacted with due Solemnity. It is too plain, that many Peoples Religion seems to be made up of Negatives, as if they were Saints, by walking like *Antipodes*. They are made believe that God is displeased at such an old Custom, that he is offended at such a Form of Service, that he is averse to such a Garb, that he is incensed at such a Gesture and Posture, and that he cannot endure such a Ceremony. Therefore, to Please God, as they think, to ingratiate themselves with him, to serve him Substantially, and after a pure and holy Manner, they love to act quite cross to the Practice of other People; and are wonderfully
zealous

zealous for this different Mode, for that different Habit, for those different Gestures and Phrases, and for other Circumstantials and Trifles which are different from, and opposite unto established Usage; all which they eagerly contend for, because they fancy, that God himself is interessed in the Quarrel, and that God's Pleasure and Satisfaction lieth at Stake. Now, what doth all this argue? Why, it shews, What Mean, Poor, and Unbecoming Apprehensions such People have of God's Super-excellent Majesty; as if he were such a nice and humorous Being, as to concern himself affectedly about phantastical Matters, about Dresses and Fashions, about Tones and Grimaces, or any other formal Modes and Out-sides of Religion. Therefore to set this Matter right, we must know, that Circumstantial Rites in the Worship of God are of no account at all with him in themselves, for their own sake, or for any inward Worth or Dignity that may be supposed to be in their own Nature. And the Reason is, because (supposing them to be purely Circumstantial, and not Idolatrous) there is no moral Good, or Evil in them;

them; I mean nothing which is either Conformable or Repugnant to the Divine Nature, by the Perfections whereof we are to take Measures of all that is really Good (as it approaches to it) and of what is really Evil (as it is at a distance from it.) But yet Circumstantials in Religion become valuable *Accidentally*; and that in two Respects; and I think in these two only: 1. *First*, When they proceed from truly pious Minds, and are outward Expressions of the inward Devotion of the Heart; and thus, the lifting up of ones Hands and Eyes, the bowing of ones Head and Knees, and the humble Prostrations of ones whole Body, the Piety that causeth it, and goes along, and mixeth with it, gives such a Tincture to the whole Action, as makes it acceptable unto God, *Accidentally*. 2. *Secondly*, Such Circumstantials are valuable, when they serve to valuable Purposes; as when they help (in their kind) to stir up other Mens Devotion, as well as signify ones own. And thus, the Use of a White Garment (which signifies to us the Innocence and Purity of our Christian Profession) Lowly and

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Reverent

Reverent Adorations; the Uncovering of the Head, the alternate Joyning of a Religious Assembly in the several Solemn and Sacred Offices, and a few more Rites in God's Publick Worship; they all serve, not only to preserve a due Decorum in the House of God, but moreover to kindle and inflame Devotion in the Hearts of the whole Assembly, like Torches which catch Fire from one another; and upon this account such Usages are valuable Accidentally. And for this reason Christianity enjoins us such Rituals as are Decent, and for Edification also; that they may serve for the common Spiritual Good of all humble and tractable People, so that they may improve in the Church, and go away with Minds better and better disposed daily, than they went to it. If there be a want of good Success in this Case, the Fault is in the Irreligious Indisposition of People's Hearts, not in the Institution itself, which was piously designed for the due Improvement of all Mens Minds in the most substantial Parts of God's Worship; and as proper Means to produce and heighten such Dispositions

tions in all our Souls, as are (as far as this poor, frail and mortal State will permit) conformable and correspondent to the Perfections of the ever blessed God.

4. And thus I am come at length to the *Fourth* and Last way of expressing our due Apprehensions of God after a Religious manner; *viz.* By Renouncing and Disclaiming such Doctrines, as directly tend to Destroy those Apprehensions. For the right understanding of this Matter, I must premise, that God is One perfectly Simple Being, without Composition, Parts, or Mixture; and without having any Essential Attributes distinct from his Essence itself, or really distinct from one another. For he is One and the same Being, perfectly Wise, Powerful, Righteous, and Good. But because our Intellectual Faculties are so weak and limited, that it is impossible for us to have one Conception of his vast Perfections all together, and at once; therefore we are forced to consider them one by one, separately, and as it were by piece-meal, so making a No-

tional Distinction between them; as between his Power and his Wisdom, between his Justice and Goodness, and the like. And hence it cometh to pass, that though the Perfections of the Deity are really all but one thing, yet (as an Excellent Writer speaks) they have the appearance of Multiplicity to us; as the one Simple Light of the Sun, diversly Refracted and Reflected from a Rorid Cloud, hath to us the Appearance of the variegated Colours of the Rain-bow. Now, the ready way of destroying all becoming Apprehensions of God, is, either by making his Attributes inconsistent with the natural Glories of his Essence, or by making one Attribute inconsistent with another; as if we should conster this or that Attribute so, as that it cannot Comport with the Notion of an absolutely perfect Being, or, as if we should interpret one Attribute so, as that it cannot Comport with the rest, or with any one of them. Such Doctrines therefore as directly tend this way, we are by all means to Renounce and Disclaim, because it is utterly impossible for any thing that is, or can be supposed

supposed to be in the Pure and Simple Nature of God, to be Contradictious, or Contrary to it self, or Destructive of it self. And yet such Doctrines there are; and those which prevail too much in the World; besides the *Epicurean* Doctrines, which serve to destroy All, even the natural Notions of God himself. As for Instance, the Heterodox and Pernicious Doctrines of the *Socinians*, whither do they tend, but to give us Measures of the Infinite Perfections of the Deity, by the false and foolish Standard of their own corrupt Reason; and so to bring down the True Notions of God, first to natural Religion, and the next Step, to None? Because, between Christianity and Scepticism the Stride is too large to be taken at once, that Heresy is so modelled, that where the *Socinian* stops, the Infidel may take rise and go on; for which reason that Heretical Scheme is Applauded by Men, who are glad of any Heterodoxes, that lead on Pretences and Advantages to Atheism, to which they are more than Well-wishers. The *Socinians* tell us, 1. *First*, That though the Power and Operations of

God are up and down in this Sublunary World, yet he is substantially and essentially Confined to Heaven, as the Body of the Sun is limited to its Sphere, though its Rays be every where dispersed; by which Notion they overthrow the just Apprehensions, which the Holy Scripture (or, the Spirit of God) gives us of the Infinity of God's Essence, by Circumscribing it to a particular place; which is a Property essentially and inseparably belonging to Material and Corporeal Beings. 2. *Secondly*, That though according to the Scripture, God knoweth all things, yet his Knowledge of future Contingencies, which depend upon the Arbitrary Determination of Mens Wills, is excluded, so that he knoweth not in that case what will certainly follow. And this destroys the due Apprehension of his Prescience and Omniscience. 3. *Thirdly*, They tell us, That though the Crimes of Mankind be never so many and great, yet there is nothing in the Nature of God to oblige or incline him to Punish them; nothing to move him to Indignation and Wrath; nor any Essential Perfection

tion that makes it necessary for him to inflict Vengeance; and that he need not do it, unless he pleaseth so to do. And this Doctrine destroys the due Apprehension of God's Holiness and Justice, and was designed on purpose to evacuate the Merits of Christ, and the Satisfaction he made to the Justice of God for the Sins of the whole World. 4. From which Non-necessity of punishing, it naturally follows, in the *Fourth* Place, That there is no Governing Providence, or, at least, no Need of it. For if there be no Need of Punishing the Sins of Men, there is no Need of Laws to forbid the Commission of them; and if there be no Need of Laws, there is no Need of a Just Being to give such Laws, or to be Displeased and Angry at the Violation of them. And this Doctrine destroys all due Apprehensions of a Provident Being over the World. 5. *Fifthly*, The *Socinians* tell us, That though there be but One God by Nature, yet there is a Second God (Jesus Christ) by Donation and Courtesy; a True Deity, but made so after his Ascension, by his Fathers voluntary Com-

municating his own Glorious Perfections to him. And this Doctrine destroys the due Apprehensions of the Essential Singularity or Onliness of God, by introducing a Duality of distinct Deities; one God by Nature, another by Grace; one Supreme, another Inferior; one Greater, and another Lesser; one Elder and Eternal, the other a Junior and Modern God, (as a very worthy Author hath shewed.)

Dr. Edwards's
Preserv.
Part I.

I might mention some more *Socinian* Doctrines, which destroy the becoming Apprehensions of God; but these are enough, enough for number, and yet pregnant too; Fruitful and Teeming, and full of Impious Consequences, which shew, that *Socinus's* Method was not very far distant from the Method of *Epicurus*, who talketh of a Plurality of Gods, a sort of out-lying Deities, that did not mind the Affairs of the World, nor lived any where in it. And this, I believe, he said in a Jocular Manner, but with a Serious Design; viz. to render all Notions of a Deity ridiculous, and to introduce Atheism: Whether this was *Socinus's* Design, it doth not appear; but

but this is manifest, that divers of his Doctrines look as if he intended that others after him should improve his Heterodox Opinions, as *Epicurus* improved the Atheistical Opinions of *Democritus*; and as *Socinus* himself improved the Heretical Opinions of the *Arians*, and *Photinians*, and other Impostors of old; if I may call that an Improvement, which is the carrying of evil Principles on still to worse and worse Purposes.

2. But besides the Doctrines of the *Socinians* (which are too Learned a Sect to become very Vulgar) there are far more popular Fancies among us, which serve to destroy those due Apprehensions which you ought to have of the Blessed God, and are therefore to be disowned.

Some People set up the Mercy of God against his Justice, as if he were a Tame Being, Fond and Indulgent; especially towards those who suppose themselves to be true Believers, though their Manners answer not the Faith of Christians indeed. They say, That their Faith alone will Save them; and though the Faith they rely on, amounts
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to no more than a bold Fancy that they are the Elect People of God, whose Names are written in the Book of Life, yet in Confidence thereof they Boggle not at any Immoralities which may serve their present Pleasures or Interest, believing that God is a most Merciful God, especially to them his Peculiar People; that he will not behold Iniquity in *Jacob*, neither see Perverseness in *Israel*. And to encourage themselves the farther in their Presumption, they conclude that Christ hath fulfilled all Righteousness for them, so that they themselves have nothing to do, but to believe strongly, that Christ's Righteousness is imputed to them, so that it becomes, by Application, their own; that they are Righteous in Christ, and Holy in Christ, though they be never so Vicious in their own Hearts and Lives; and that having the Robe of Christ's Righteousness upon them, it is such a Charm upon the Divine Mercy, that it binds up the Hands of Justice, and makes them Vengeance-proof, notwithstanding their inside Impurities; nay, though they dye in them. Thus these
bold

bold Solifidians make the Mercy of God their Sanctuary and Refuge, and advance his Clemency (though it extends only to true hearty Penitents) to overthrow his Justice (though that must take its turn, when all the blessed Methods of Grace and Goodness are rendered ineffectual.) Therefore it is necessary to Renounce such unbecoming Apprehensions of God, as make his Mercy and Justice to Clash and Interfere with each other; whereas both are Absolute and Harmonious Perfections, Infinite in themselves, and infinitely extended towards their Respective and Proper Objects. In short, you must so conceive of both these Glorious Attributes, as not to dread the one, if you are a Reformed Penitent; nor presume upon the other, if you go on still in your Wickedness.

I say, If you go on still in your Wickedness; for in all Cases there is left room for Repentance, if it be Universal, Sincere, and Operative. For there are some People that betray their most unbecoming Apprehensions of God, by setting up his Justice

Justice against his Mercy, as others do his Mercy against his Justice. As for instance, a Man follows an Irreligious and Dissolute Course, till his Conscience (not able to bear it any longer) becomes very Froward and Tempestuous, and flies in his Face for all the Impurities and Debaucheries of his Life; so that in the End he is brought to that miserable Pass, that he utterly Despairs of the Divine Mercy, having no Sense of God left him, but of Divine Justice. Nothing is before him, but the Black Register of his Crimes, the Terrors of an Angry God, and the dismal Prospect of Hell and Damnation. The gravest Counsels make not any due Impressions upon his Mind; nor will he suffer any Notions to enter into his Heart, but that God is implacable, and that his Sins are more and greater than God can Pardon. Such a Case is very sad indeed, and yet not so uncommon, as that the stoutest Wretch can promise himself Security from making it his own another day. And 'tis much the sadder, because such desperate Apprehensions scandalize the Nature of God,
of

of whose Glorious Perfections infinite Mercy is one, and that whereof the whole Bible is, in a manner, but a continued History, from the Beginning to the very End.

But there are other most unworthy Apprehensions of God, which are behind yet; and such as are far more Rife and Popular; and the more to be avoided, because they serve to advance the *Power and Will* of God against his Goodness, Holiness, Truth, and Righteousness also, and render him a Tyrannical and Malevolent Deity; nay, the worst and most hateful of all Beings; whereas indeed he is the most indearing Object of every good Man's Affections. We have been often and publicly told of very *horrible Decrees*, the belief whereof has been accounted by the Defenders of them so many necessary Articles of Christianity, tho' most impiously Reflecting upon God's Perfections: As, that he, to shew his Sovereign Power, decreed to make the greatest Part of Mankind with a peremptory Design to torment them Eternally; that to this End he doth by his irresistible Power force People to Sin,

Sin; at least denies them a Sufficiency of Grace, whereby they may avoid Sin and Destruction, that thereby he may Triumph in their Everlasting Torments; that he fatally determines every Man's Doom, without any foresight of their Qualifications, or Consideration of their Deserts; that his Power and absolute Will is the Rule of his Actions; which are therefore to be look'd upon as Just, because he absolutely pleaseth to do them; and that he is irresistibly Imperious and Arbitrary in all his Dealings with Mankind, without any regard to those things, which we poor finite Mortals call Reason, Righteousness and Goodness. These ugly Doctrines, and divers more, which hang together with them on a String, shape out the Deity as a most Savage Being, that Sports and Recreates himself in the Eternal Torments of his poor Creatures; they render him Mischievous and Spiteful, Cruel and Barbarous; and make him, instead of the most Charming, the most Frightful and Odious Object: A Representation, which is infinitely more becoming the Evil Principle of the old

old Manichees, nay, the Devil himself, than the God of Love. And yet to carry on this monstrous Scene yet farther, the Patrons of these Doctrines are forced by their own Notions to disguise the ever Blessed God, as a Dissembling, False, and Deceitful Being too, whose Word is not to be trusted, though it be confirmed with his Oath. For when they are pressed with such Passages of Scripture, as do plainly speak him an universal Lover of Souls; as, that he is not willing that any should perish, *but that all should come to Repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. And how he hath Sworn, that *he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, Ezek. 33. 11. That *by two immutable things*, (his Declaration and his Oaths too) *in which it is impossible for God to Lye*, we might have a strong Consolation, Heb. 6. 18. When, I say, they are pressed with these and the like Texts of Scripture, to rid themselves of the Pinch, they betake themselves to this Subterfuge, That there is a Secret Will of God, whereby he absolutely resolves to Damn so many Millions of Mankind,
and

and a Revealed Will, whereby he declares his Unwillingness to Damn any. And thus they destroy God's Veracity. Though it be a Perfection as Essential to him, as his Nature, and the same with his Nature, yet rather than be robbed of their own Opinions, they commit a Riot upon him, and Rob him of Himself: As an Admirable Writer speaks, They set an Opposition between his Revealed, and his Secret Will, making the one a Blind for the better Execution of the other; as if all the Transportation and Zeal he expresses for us, all the passionate enamouring Invitations he makes to us, were only to sport himself with our Credulity: Nay, as if all the Protestations and most Solemn Oaths of God were designed but to advance the Delusion, and to raise Expectations, merely to Defeat them. This is such a severe sort of Irony, as we would all think not only unkind, but unjust in a Man; and 'tis not possible that God, who Appeals to us concerning the Equality of his Ways, should fall short of the strictest Measures among us, or Exemplify

plify to us an Insincerity he forbids us to follow.

Therefore, to Express our becoming Apprehensions of God, we must bid utter Defiance to such Impious Doctrines as tend to raise a War in Heaven between God's harmonious Attributes; making them to Clash with one another, and to stand in Opposition to one another. And in order thereunto, we must have equal Conceptions of their Immensity; and that they are so absolutely Perfect, as not to be capable of any higher Degrees of Perfection. This is plain, because God's Attributes are so many Essential Intrinsic Glories of his most perfect Nature. However, these Perfections are *Exercised* in a manner suitable to the Nature and Quality of those Objects, which are fit for the Glory of them to be displayed upon, as there is proper Occasion and Reason for it; as there is for Mercy to be extended to all Sincere Penitents, and Justice to be displayed upon Hardened and Incorrigible Wretches; and so for the rest. Accordingly we must believe, That he is an All-seeing God, as to observe

A Discourse concerning

Mens Necessities, so, when there is occasion, to take notice of their Crimes too; That he is a most Wise God, as to order all things for our Good, so, when there is a proper Occasion, to make us Eat of the Fruit of our own Ways, and to fill us with our own Devices; That he is a most Faithful God, as to make all his Promises good, so, as occasion requires, to execute his Menaces; That he is an Omnipotent God, as to supply our Wants, so to punish all malicious Wickedness; That he is a most Righteous God, as to Reward the Obedient, so, when there is occasion, to Revenge himself upon the Workers of Iniquity; That he is a most Merciful God, to forgive the Sins of those who Confess and Forsake them; but so as when occasion serves, to deny his Grace to those, who wilfully forsake their own Mercies. Lastly, That he is a most Veracious God, that keepeth Mercy for Thousands; nay, for all that will but lay hold on it; so that whosoever believeth in Christ, shall not perish; as, on the other hand, he that believeth not, shall be Damned. Thus, by our equal Apprehensions of
God's

God's most perfect Attributes, we shall make them all harmoniously Consistent with one another, and every one Consistent with it self: And the Result of all will be this, That we shall fix our own Minds upon a sure Bottom, so that we shall not hope for Impunity, if we wilfully Sin on; nor despair of Mercy, if we Repent and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

F I N I S.

the Exhibition of 1851

Gods most perfect Attributes we shall
make them all harmoniously consistent
with one another and every one con-
sistent with itself. And the beauty of
all will be in the unity of all. Ex-
actly as in the human body, to
be perfect, the various organs
must be in perfect harmony and
bring forth a perfect result.



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